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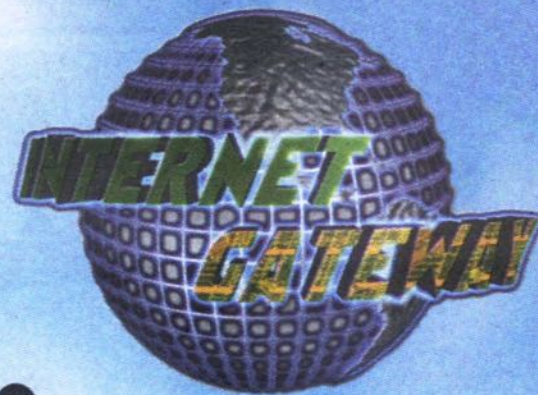
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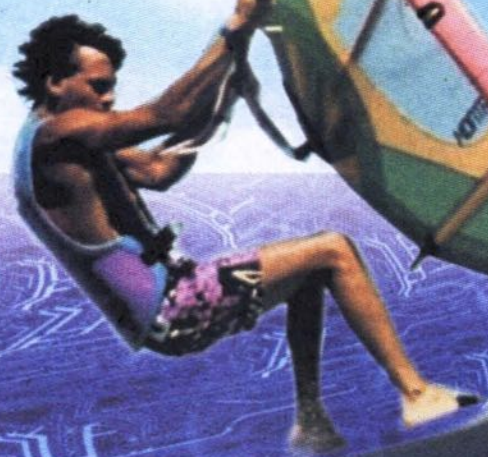


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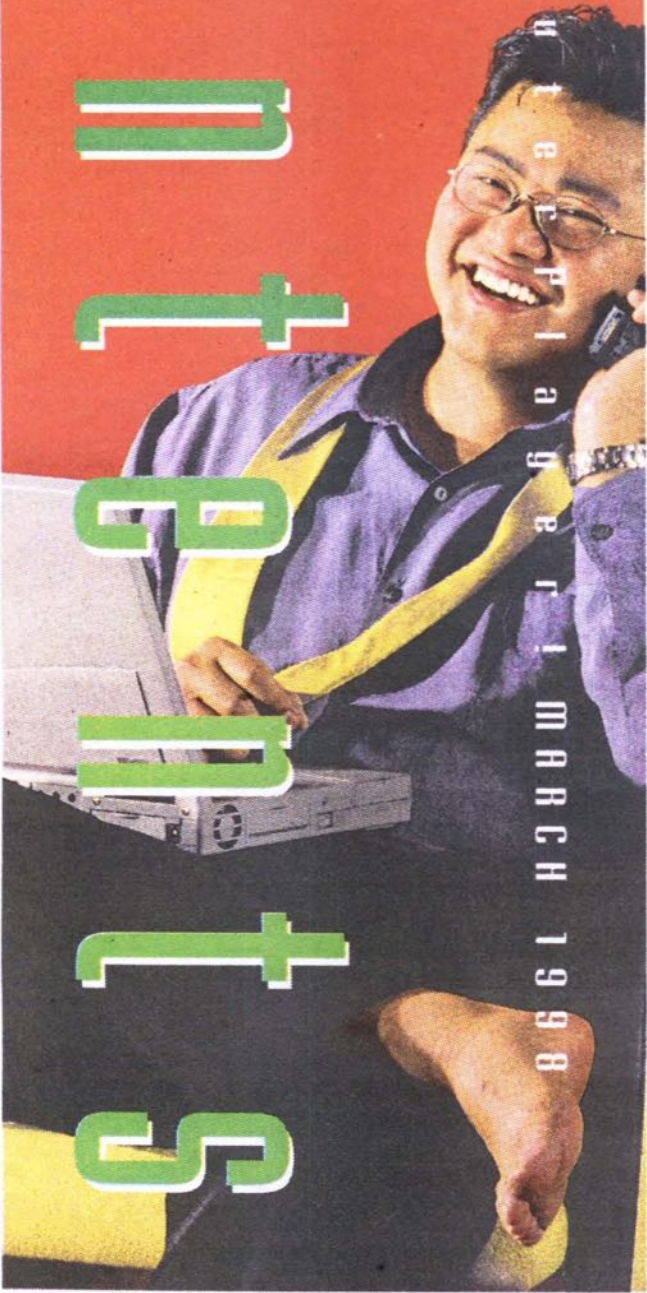
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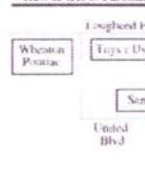
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ABOUT THE COVER

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 at: <http://www.computer-player.com/>

Keeping up with the Joneses Inc.



Letter from the editor

I was recently deconstructing the big stack of papers on my desk at home and forming smaller stacks of bills, receipts, statements, and pay stubs (in preparation for avoiding filing my taxes for a few more weeks), when I noticed that the format of my pay stubs for the last year had changed three times. Though not a dramatic revelation, it was tangible evidence of the changes my employer, Canada Computer Paper Inc., had gone through in a 12-month period. These small sheets of paper signified jobs moved, jobs made more efficient, but most of all jobs changed. The cliché that change is constant has never been more true in the workplace.

And in the spirit of purposeful change, we've made an alteration to the *Computer Player!* that addresses the issues faced by both employers and employees whose work has been and continues to be modified by new technology. In our new *Digital Workforce* section we will look at how businesses are employing new software, hardware, and services, and we will be sharing some of their experiences—good and bad.

For the *Digital Workforce* debut, we start small, very small, with the home office. Deciding to work at home means big changes for an individual conditioned to "going" to work every day. The boundaries between work and play blur. You may be able to work in your pajamas, but there is also the lure of TV, coffee, food, sunshine ...

And if working at home also means working for yourself, it comes with an extra set of challenges. With the exhilaration of being your own boss, there is the agony of making all the decisions yourself and

having no one to share the blame or the applause. And mulling over the latest technology that could help you keep up with or pull ahead of the competition is a luxury when you also have to answer the phone, respond to the mail and get the bills paid.

Our hardware review (page 10) this month looks at a type of computer peripheral aimed directly at home office workers as well as smaller offices. These machines, like home office workers themselves, are capable of performing many duties. Referred to as multifunction devices, they package a scanner, fax, copier and printer into one machine. They are a good option for users with complex needs but limited space and dollars.

We also look at how to set up your home office (page 12) and some furniture ideas (page 14). Some of those ideas are provided by IKEA, as is \$1,000 worth of home office furniture the company will give to the winner of our home office contest (see page 28 for details).

Investing in new technology

We welcome Tom Klein back to the pages of *Computer Player!* in this issue. Klein will be frequenting our pages with his thoughts on technology stocks. This month he writes about the recent wave of mergers and acquisitions, the rise of enterprise resource planning companies and other niche areas where you may want to plant your money and watch it grow (after your own careful thought and research, of course).

Do as I say, not as I do

While I'm delaying the inevitable (taxes not death), I heartily recommend that you read our review of this year's crop of tax software (page 44), as doing so will inspire you to file on time and sleep soundly.

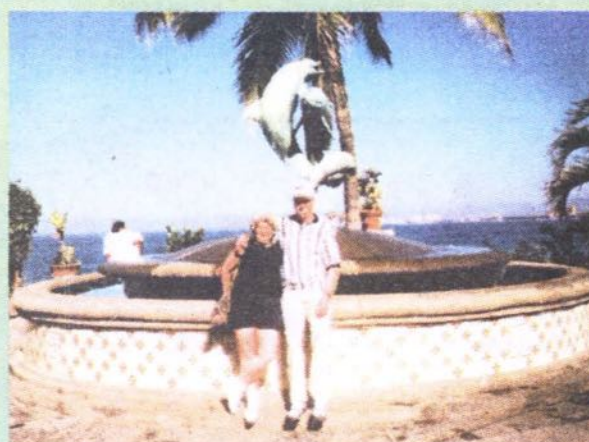
Let us know what you think,

Megan Johnston, Associate Editor, meganj@tcp.ca

Your letters please

Letters on issues raised in the paper or general computer topics are welcome. Please be brief. We regret that we are unable to look up stories from past issues, suggest products, or solve all your computer problems. Only those with names and e-mail or snail-mail addresses will be published. Letters may be edited for space or content.

The Editor,
 Computer Player!,
 Canada Computes!
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It's been
a trip

Albert L. Christensen,
 of Edmonton, sent in his
 thanks and some photos
 taken on the trip
 to Mexico that he won for
 his participation in our
 August readership
 survey.

around Microsoft Windows 95, and the articles are very, um, non-critical, to put it politely.

I thought it was an interesting coincidence

that the same month also had articles on digital photo manipulation, as in my business I do just this with Amigas!

Steve Greenfield

Amiga amore

Having just read the article on the re-emergence of the Amiga (February 1998), I would just like to congratulate the author, and yourselves, for producing a well researched, and refreshingly unbiased report. Thank you.

Mark Le Noury

Congrats to CP! for recognizing the revitalization of the amazing Amiga computer platform. I have owned and operated two Amigas over the last ten years. The OS has stagnated over the last few years, but I would not give up my Ami for anything else out there.

Mark Tocheri

Thank you for your coverage of the Amiga. Living here in "Microsoft Country," less than an hour from Redmond, Wash., pretty much all the computer coverage I see revolves

Camera Winner

David Boulanger is the winner of a draw at Comdex PacRim for a Kodak Digital Science DC210 digital camera. The contest was open to readers of Canada Computer Paper Inc.'s four publications (*Computer Player!*, *The Computer Paper*, *Canadian Computer Wholesaler* and *Government Computer*) who filled out one of our survey forms at the trade show in January. Thanks to Mr. Boulanger and the other 1,500 readers who shared their views on our publications. We'll be using the information to make sure we continue to give you what you want to read. ♦

Newton fan speaks out

Re The latest in handheld PCs (January 1998): I bought a Newton and it came with two cords to allow it to connect to both my Mac and DOS computers.

I find that the Newton's ability to recognize my handwriting makes it the perfect tool to take notes at meetings.

I also think that if the Newton was any smaller it would be difficult to write on it. Its ability to act as an electronic sheet of paper makes it the ideal replacement for my laptop.

It does all the tasks that my laptop ever did without the bulky size and weight. Maybe if it was evaluated in respect to a small laptop, rather than a limited pocket sized unit, your conclusions may have been swayed in its favour.

Les Roberson ♦

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eCharge adds Net buys to phone bill

Vancouver's eCharge Corp. has launched a new Internet marketing product that bills online purchases from participating merchants to a Web surfer's telephone bill.

The eCharge Billing System is designed for the purchase of downloadable items or for services that are measured in time. These categories include purchases of software, music, graphic art, books and informational files, or online gaming. According to eCharge, the billing system is also suitable for charities or educational facilities for fundraising, or selling course content or notes over the Net. Presently, the eCharge limit is set at US\$50.

"Shoppers weren't exactly flocking to the Net," said eCharge president, Rob Hutchison. "It was too complicated. We've made it easy. We're using the same 1-900 billing system that customers are accustomed to using when calling tech support help desks, such as the one Microsoft operates."

At this time, eCharge shopping is not available in Canada, but Canadian merchants can use the system to sell products or services to customers in the U.S. The eCharge service is expected to be available in Canada by the spring.

echarge, <http://www.echarge.com>

UBC, Roundhouse launch new computer lab

The Roundhouse Community Centre in Yaletown and the University of British Columbia Continuing Studies department have opened a high-tech computer lab in the Roundhouse in early January.

"This classroom marks the beginning of a new digital phase for the Roundhouse," according to Gerry Thorne, president of the centre's Community Arts and Recreation Society.

With the new lab, the Roundhouse plans to incorporate computer and Internet technology in courses, workshops and special events held at the centre. Since the Roundhouse is located in one of the most wired neighbourhoods in B.C., the lab is expected to generate considerable interest.

William Koty, manager of Internet programs for the UBC Continuing Studies expects the partnership to provide greater access to the department's courses. UBC Continuing Studies has equipped the lab with 15 Internet workstations in exchange for use of the location.

Concord Pacific and BC Tel have donated the fibre-optic Internet connection for the new lab. The lab will also be available for public rental.

For info on lab rentals or UBC Continuing Studies, call 822-1420

For info on the Roundhouse call 713-1800

Digital Siren detector proves popular

A digital siren detector is proving to be a cost-effective and efficient safety feature in several communities throughout B.C., according to its Vancouver developer Sonic Systems Corp. The Sonem 2000 detects emergency vehicles as they approach intersections, and causes the traffic light to give the vehicle right-of-way. An oncoming siren is detected by one of four listening devices (or microphones) are attached to a traffic light. The sound is then converted to a digital signal that is relayed to a control card installed in the traffic controller. The traffic controller, a component of the traffic light, then pre-empts the light. The listening devices can be programmed to detect any of the common siren sounds.

According to Sonic Systems' Mike Krasny, the Sonem 2000 is faster, safer and more eco-

nomical than the radio-based systems or the light-activated systems currently in use. "The other systems require operator input, and can be effected by congested air waves or weather conditions. They also need special equipment to be installed in each vehicle, and this is costly."

According to the company, the Sonem 2000 can also communicate with distant traffic lights to clear the way for oncoming ambulances, fire trucks or police cars.

The detector is being used in Nanaimo, Mission, Squamish, Courtenay, and on the Island Highway, as well as in several U.S. locations.

Sonic Systems,

<http://www.sonic-systems.com>

Motion Works to specialize in effects

Vancouver's Motion Works Group Ltd. expects 1998 will be a year of big changes. In the last year, this full service "all media" production studio completed the Cosmopolitan Virtual Makeover CD-ROM for SegaSoft, Anastasia: Adventures with Pooka and Bartok for Fox

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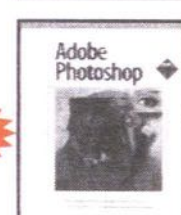
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| Refresh Rate | 86 Hz | 86 Hz | 109 Hz |
| Macintosh® Compatible | Yes* | Yes* | Yes* |
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What about refresh rates?

Basically the higher the refresh rate the better. Refresh rates relate to how fast a monitor image is painted on screen. A 75 Hz refresh rate (the very minimum recommended rate) means the screen image is repainted 75 times per second. Higher refresh rates eliminate flickers that may cause eye strain. Sometimes, this flicker is not even perceptible, but it's there, causing eye fatigue. The ViewSonic G810 provides a phenomenal 109 Hz rate at 1,024 x 768 resolution.



Have it all with multifunction machines

BY LYNN GREINER

These units, which combine, at a minimum, printing, convenience copying, facsimile, and scanning, offer a number of benefits to the space-challenged small office. First is the small footprint. In the desk space needed for a standalone fax machine, users get the functionality of several machines, often with a convenient interface that makes using and managing the gadgets a breeze.

But there are downsides to this type of portmanteau of usefulness. The biggie is, if one component breaks, the entire machine must go out for repair. You can't keep printing if you want the scanner fixed. A small office that must always have a printer available should supplement its multifunction box with an inexpensive single-function printer, even if it's just stuffed in a closet most of the time.

As you can see from the prices, these boxes range from the economical to "ouch!" Two of the units in our roundup are monochrome, the rest colour. The monochrome units use laser (or laser-like) technology, while the colour models use inkjets. This adds yet another wrinkle, operating costs. Inkjets are typically more expensive to run, needing pricey cartridges and special paper for decent output. The wrong paper can result in bleeding, smudging, or fuzzy characters. Inkjets are also considerably slower than lasers. It's a trade-off. If you really want colour output, then you put up with the inconvenience. Otherwise, you can opt for a monochrome unit (and there are several excellent ones besides the two we mention here) and save the aggravation and expense of the colour inkjet. Now, to our roundup:

Brother MFC-7000C

The MFC-7000C is a largish box compared to most of the others. It offers six functions: colour printer, colour copier, TWAIN-compliant colour scanner, plain-paper fax, colour PC fax, and message centre. It also has a jack you can use for direct input from a digital camera, camcorder, or VCR.

The inkjet printer is supplied from separate colour cartridges—one each of black, yellow, cyan, and magenta. This is an excellent feature, since it means you only have to replace the colour that's empty rather than having to replace a four-color cartridge when only one color has run dry. Speed is rated at up to 5 pages per minute (ppm) monochrome, and 3 ppm in colour.

The unit includes its own bidirectional parallel cable (all of these devices need one, not all include one), and a telephone handset. There's a 30-page document feeder, and

200-sheet paper tray. The copier enlarges and reduces originals, and can do up to 99 copies. Fax memory is 100 pages, and the message centre holds up to 50 minutes of messages.

The software bundle includes Visioneer's PaperPort scanning software, Xerox TextBridge OCR (optical character recognition), InfoImaging 3D fax software, Corel PrintHouse, Kai's Power Goo SE, and My Marketing Materials. PrintHouse and Power Goo are Windows 95 only, while the rest (and the unit) will work with Windows 3.1x.

Print quality is quite acceptable, although it was a bit of a skirmish to persuade the unit to output pages in the correct order (default is



HP OfficeJet 635

face-up, in reverse order). Faxing and both colour and monochrome copying can be done either from the computer, or directly from the unit's control panel. But don't lose the manual—programming this box is not intuitive!

Canon MultiPASS C5000

The MultiPASS C5000 reduced me to some very bad language, not because it's

a poor-quality printer, but because its installation program managed to aim its printouts at Hijaak Print Capture, a utility that grabs bitmaps of printouts and stores them to disk rather than printing them (telling the machine to bypass spooling solved that problem). Once I induced it to print, quality was reasonable, but a colour copy of a print of a grey cat on a beige floor gave me a rather pink kitty on a reddish floor.

The MultiPASS offers colour printing, colour copying, colour faxing, and a TWAIN-compliant colour scanner, for

Windows 95 only. It's a small contraption, only a tiny bit larger than a normal Canon inkjet printer. It comes with two cartridges: a colour cartridge (with a black reservoir), and a plain black cartridge. Speed is up to 5 ppm monochrome and 2 ppm in colour.

The paper tray holds 100 sheets of plain paper or 50 transparencies. Fax memory is 42 pages, and the copier will do some reduction (monochrome only), and up to 99 copies. You can fax or copy from a PC or directly from the printer.

The software is extensive, but intrusive. The Desktop Manager and Pagis Document Manager plonk their toolbars on the desktop whether you like it or not. Scanning is handled by ScanGear. A



Okioffice 44



Brother MFC 7000C

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EDITOR'S CHOICE

Hewlett Packard's new OfficeJet 635. with its easy-to-use software, high-quality output, and trouble-free operation, is our pick for the Editor's Choice. At a reasonable price, you get all of the functionality you could want, wrapped up.

bonus Canon Creative 3 CD-ROM includes goodies such as ColorDesk Photo, Design Essentials, CreaCard SE, Color Store, WebRecord, Starfish's Internet Utilities 97, and AT&T WorldNet Internet service, plus a whack of stock photos, clip art, and graphics.

Hewlett Packard OfficeJet 635

The OfficeJet 635 is also a little guy, barely bigger than an inkjet printer. Unlike the other colour units in this roundup, it has a power switch, a feature that endeared it to me right from the start. I like to choose whether to leave a device turned on, not have the decision forced on me. It also has a solid, flat plastic output tray rather than the narrow bent wire trays offered by the others.

Functions include colour printing, colour copying, and colour scanning. Print speed is up to 5 ppm monochrome and 2 ppm colour. The input tray holds about 150 sheets, and

the document tray 20 sheets. Copies may be reduced or enlarged, and the machine can produce up to 99 copies of an original. But, like any inkjet, it does this slo-o-o-wly, so it's not a good idea to try!

HP supplies sleeves you can tuck photos and other small fiddly objects into for scanning so they won't get munched. Colour and monochrome scans and printouts come out well (although I noticed occasional banding in solid-black areas), and the user interface is clean and easy to navigate. The unit can share a phone line with an internal PC modem, or an answering machine, or voice mail, and simple installation instructions ensure you plug the right pieces into the right spots.

Konica 7410 Plus

The 7410 Plus is, as you can tell from the \$4,585 price, in a much higher tier than the other units. It's the only true laser of the bunch, a rock-solid monochrome monster that outputs at 12 ppm. It's a great copier and plain-paper fax (which is probably how it started life) that has had PC connectivity grafted on at a fairly significant price. It has smarts, too—when it jams, it knows enough to redo the damaged page. But all of its scanning and PC functionality is in the form of additional cost add-ons—our test unit had the \$1,260 PostScript/PCL Kit, the \$140 Class 1 Kit for serial printing, scanning, and PC faxing, and a \$400 memory upgrade. And it costs another \$65 for TWAIN compliance.

Print quality is laser sharp. There's a standard 70-page fax memory, a 250-page input cassette (you can add an optional 500-sheet tray), and a 30-page document feeder. Oddly enough, output is face-up, which means the pages come out in reverse order and must be manually recollated.

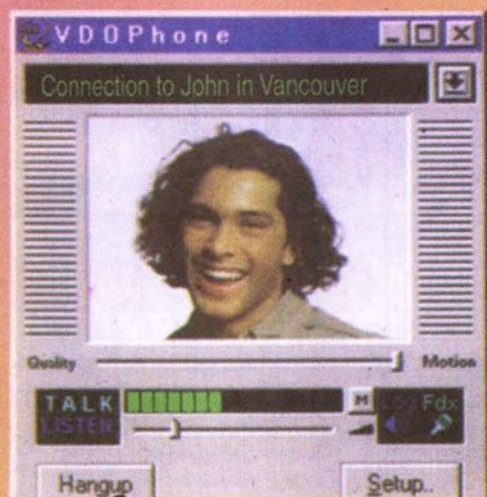
OkiData OkiOffice 44

The OkiOffice 44 has taken the up to 4 ppm LED print engine from the OkiPage 4W and wrapped it in a package that includes faxing, copying, and TWAIN-compliant scanning (all monochrome). The unit is medium sized, at 31.2x39x19 cm (12.3x15.3x7.5 in.), and weighs only 6.75 kg (16 lb.). Like most of the inkjets, it lacks a power switch.

The setup was straightforward, with one exception—you have to remove the drum to get at some packing materials, and the instructions on this are terrible. The machine attaches to the parallel port using an included cable, although it assigns to pseudo COM

continued on page 15

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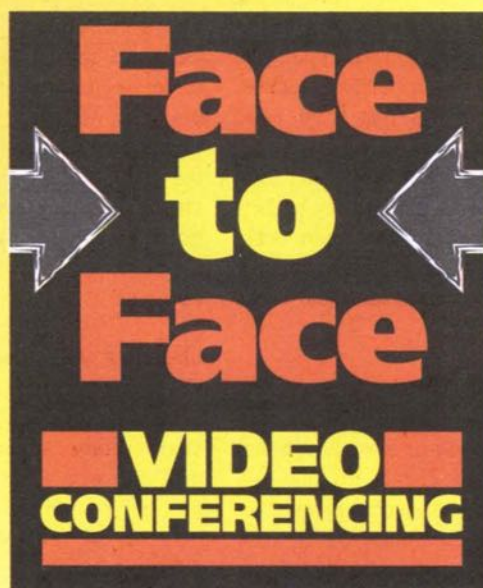


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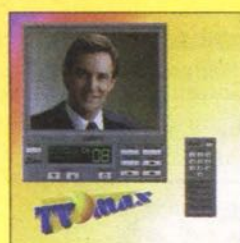
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digital workforce

Working at home?

Set it up right

BY LEE LESTER

So, you're on your own. Worrying, but thrilling. Exciting, but possibly risky. For the decisions you take now may well decide your success or failure, happiness or despair.

When you start out, safeguarding every penny is a top priority. You no longer have a company credit card and your copper handshake won't last very long.

You need a cost-efficient way of controlling expenses and inventory, budgeting income against expenditure, and keeping track of potential clients. Assessing what your needs are beforehand makes building a home office is a lot easier than you might think.

Where to park

First you need a place to put the computer. And somewhere to put yourself when you're at the computer.

Okay, down to basics: your seat. Like everything else, you get what you pay for. While you may get by with an Activa SuperBlaster 286 computer, get the most comfortable chair you can afford. Your back will thank you. It will let you know if you haven't.

The seat should adjust for height and tilt. Adjustable lumbar support is a real plus. Adjustable armrests may help prevent back and shoulder pain by providing forearm support. Prices range from \$250 to \$500 new

(second-hand outlets often have good stuff for much less).

Tip: get a plastic mat to go under your chair. Rolling around will soon wear out your carpet or scratch your parquet if you don't. Price: about \$30.

Desk? My first working surface, after the kitchen table, was an old door supported at each end by a stack of flue liners. Again, second-hand may do nicely, though office equipment stores may say otherwise.

A fancy desk and other furniture may do wonders for your morale, but your home doesn't have to look like a corner of a corporate heaven. And who's going to visit you while you work? So watch out for specials. Prices for new furnishings rise from \$120 right up to the stratosphere.

A desk by itself may not be what you really need, however. A workstation may be better. Do your paperwork on the main desk, then swivel back and forth to your computer located on the return, the extension that sticks out at 90 degrees.

Keep it tidy

Ask whether a hutch (a desk-top unit containing a number of open or closed sections) is included in the price. If not, it could add hundreds of dollars to your accounts payable. The hutch can help you maintain a tidy work environment, which is priceless for some people. Cost of workstation: from \$100 up to the stratosphere again.

You don't need a new filing cabinet (\$120-\$180). Second-hand models shouldn't be hard to find. A bookcase for bulky folders and software, as well as books, is a good idea, and may set you back \$50 (or much more). My first office bookcase consisted of several planks sitting on cinder blocks at each end. I used it for years.

Tip: a pull-out computer keyboard shelf that rests under a desk is great, but not without space for a mouse pad. Otherwise, the pad takes up needed space on the desk. You'll quickly get tired as you constantly lift and lower your hand from keyboard to mouse. Make sure they're both on the same level. Your arm and wrist will thank you.

Choosing your tools

The computer itself? What you do will decide your choice. If you're into heavy graphics or engineering, settling for an entry-level machine won't cut it. If you mainly word process, a used machine as old as ten years may be enough. My daughter finished her degree in 1996 pounding out essays on a 1987 Macintosh SE. Today, a basic 166 MHz MMX machine with monitor and 24x CD-

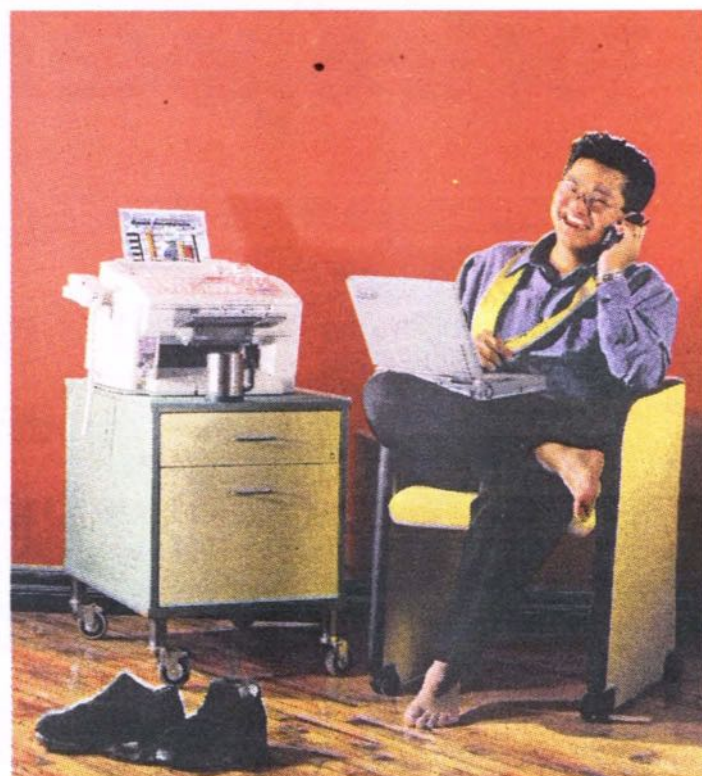
ROM drive plus 33.6Kbps fax modem will still leave change out of \$1,400.

When you're in business, you use your computer all the time. Ensure that the place you buy it from will service it in the event of computer problems. Saving a few bucks by installing new peripherals yourself is nice, but not if it swallows up hours that could be spent earning income.

Tip: make sure all the necessary components are included in the price. Some places charge extra for Windows 95, for example.

Monitors? It's amazing that most monitors can only turn and tilt. Try to get one that allows you to adjust the height precisely to

continued on page 13



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digital workforce

Working at home?

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your own requirements. Your neck and shoulders will thank you.

Go for the largest screen with the smallest dot pitch you can afford. Your eyes will thank you.

Printers? Inkjets are good; lasers are better. Some now sell for only \$250. Unless you need colour, you'll save money with a black and white laser, which prints pages much more cheaply than an inkjet.

Software? Get only what you need. A full office suite isn't worth it if you only word process—you don't need the high-powered presentation graphics module. And if you only have a few appointments, you don't require elaborate scheduling software.

Keeping accounts current is essential. Get a program you can understand, not necessarily what your accountant recommends, although it must satisfy Revenue Canada requirements. My favourite: BestWare's MYOB Accounting (\$99). If you are a Macintosh user, it's the only accounting program for you.

Working in sales? Software that enables you to search for potential clients by address, phone number, or type of business is indispensable. Pro CD's Select Phone Canadian Edition does all that and more. It'll even dial a selected number for you. You could say that you can't stay at home without it. The 1998 version sells for US\$79; with a half-year update, \$119.

BC news briefs

continued from page 8

Interactive, and a special effects contract for the feature film *Laserhawk*.

"It was a good year, but we think we can do better," says studio president Don Gray. "We are moving our interactive and online creative development to Toronto, and will focus our Vancouver studio on post production and special effects for film and television. The new development team, to be located in Toronto, will begin working on the US\$1.5 million Jack Nicklaus interactive golf tutorial project."

Motion Works has signed a \$3 million contract to begin production of a TV series for a large U.S.-based producer. This work will be done in the Vancouver studio.

"This reorganization will allow us to focus our post production resources in British Columbia under the guidance of industry veteran John Lambert. At the same time, we will establish our interactive and online team in Toronto where we can take advantage of provincial tax credits and a huge talent pool of graphic artists and designers," Gray said. Motion Works, <http://www.mwg.com>

June Campbell is a writer and the owner/operator of Nightcats Multimedia Productions, and can be contacted by email at campbellj@istar.ca, or by phone 604-980-3261 during business hours.

Line dancing

If you get a lot of faxes or phone calls, a separate line is essential. But do you need a separate fax machine? Or will your computer

do? It's a question of quantity. A lot of faxes will soon exhaust the space on your hard drive, so a fax machine is a must. With only a few faxes, your computer is all you need.

And you'll save some money by not printing out everything you get, only what you choose. Oh, you'll need one more thing—luck. Lots of it! ♦

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Home office furnishing: Champagne dreams on diet-soda budgets

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BY S.J. ROSS

In furnishing the small or home office, (SOHO), there is a constant struggle between the ideal situation and the painful reality. Ideally, your budget would allow you to purchase office furnishings that are as beautiful as they are ergonomic. But in reality, most of us have champagne dreams

clouded by a diet-soda budget.

But curiosity begs the question: How would you furnish a home office if you had a generous budget? Conversely, how would you furnish your office if you had a restrictive budget? And how would the two office furnishings compare?

Although both companies offer products at a variety of prices, we asked Steelcase Canada and IKEA Canada to develop one SOHO furnishing package each: Steelcase based on a \$10,000 budget and IKEA based on a \$1,000 budget. For those with a champagne budget, the Steelcase package will help you prepare your shopping list. And, for those with a diet-soda budget, the IKEA suite demonstrates how to squeeze every last dime of value from limited dollars.

On the case

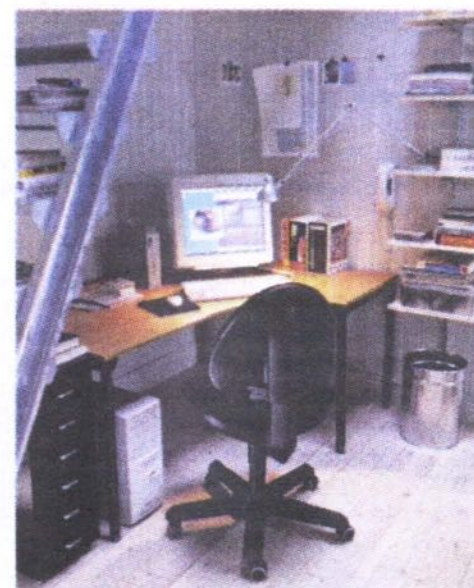
The Steelcase package totals \$12,144—

\$2,144 more than the allotted \$10,000—but since this reflects the suggested list price, retailers may sell items for less.

Steelcase selected the high-back Rapport chair (\$1,319). Fully adjustable, you can alter the seat height and tilt, back angle and tension, as well as move the lumbar pillow up or down; optional arm height and width adjustability is also available. This sturdy chair is particularly good for users whose daily tasks include a range of activities.

According to ergonomist Anne Duffy, of The Ergonomic Approach, "It has all the features we like to see in a chair and the lumbar pillow is very good, but I wouldn't spend this much money unless you had special back needs."

The furnishings are from the Relevant suite in the Broadmoor line. Selected items include a veneer slip fit (a handy feature allowing you to slide a drawer unit under your desk); a



28.5-inch-high end panel with an extended corner work surface (\$1,834); a veneer left-hand bread-board work surface (\$275); and an overhead binder bin with a veneer front and top (\$2,036). The selection also includes an open veneer hutch (\$1,208), a veneer tall-boy with a single door and two files (\$3,001), and a veneer low boy (\$2,471).

The pieces are available in all types of
continued on page 15

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Home office furnishing ...

continued from page 14

wood (walnut, cherry, maple, and oak), wood and laminate, or all laminate. The tables can either have castors or glides, and the pieces are attached with stability clips to allow for reconfiguration.

"The only ergonomic adjustability in this workstation is in the chair," says Duffy. "With this setup you need to have an articulating keyboard arm that offers some height adjustability, but the lip on the bottom of the working surface may interfere with this."

On the plus side, (beyond the suite's obvious beauty), the furnishings offer generous work surface space, flexibility (the slip fit feature allows for the expansion and shrinkage of surface work space as needed), and an abundance of storage space. On the downside, there is no keyboard drawer pullout unit and no task lighting, footrest, or other optional items (though Steelcase does offer some excellent accessories at an additional price).

How Swede it is

Alternatively, IKEA managed to fill a small office with furnishings totaling only \$994.95, leaving just enough money to

Having it all

continued from page 10

ports for faxing and scanning. Paper is fed in and output to the same printer-top tray, which holds 100 sheets. The driver was a bit cranky about output order; sometimes recollating face-up pages correctly, and sometimes not.

It can produce up to 50 copies per original (full-size, reduced, or enlarged), and copy quality is excellent (it may use LEDs, but this machine outputs like a laser).

Xerox WorkCentre 450c

The WorkCentre 450c is an attractive unit that offers colour printing (up to 4 ppm monochrome, 1 ppm colour), and monochrome TWIN-compliant scanning, faxing, and copying (up to 99 copies per original; it enlarges and reduces). The input tray holds 150 sheets, the document feeder and output tray 20 pages each.

Print quality is good, especially with text, but the printer drivers under Windows 3.1 are fractious. In tests, they kept quitting after printing a single page, or generating "cartridge error" messages that sometimes annoyed the PC enough to require a reboot. As a standalone fax or copier, though, the 450c behaved flawlessly.

Separate ink reservoirs for each colour save money, and the Xerox ControlCentre software shows you how much ink is left in each, a nice touch that can prevent nasty surprises in the middle of an important job.

Xerox includes a collection of software for Windows 3.x and 95, including Pagis Pro 97, TextBridge Pro, Xerox PerfectScan, WinFAX Lite, and Verity's Topic Search Engine. They also throw in a bidirectional parallel cable. ♦

purchase a handful of pencils.

The most expensive item (\$299), the beech veneer desk, was selected from IKEA's Effektiv line of business furnishings. Ideal

for corner placement, the small, L-shaped desk measures 160 cm long, and is 120 cm deep on the right side and 80 cm deep on the left. Finishes range from beech or oak veneer

to white melamine with black or silver lacquered legs, which are height adjustable from 67-75 cm.

continued on page 16

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The origami office

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A trend unfolding among home office furniture designers is closet-like units that open up to reveal self-contained workstations, which are folded back up and tucked away at the end of the work day. They allow for dual use of limited space, such as an office area in a small home, or they can create a defined work space in a larger open area, such as a loft or warehouse.

IKEA makes two basic versions of this type of unit, the Kavaljer and Esbern. Of the closet offices we looked at, these are the most compact and the easiest on the wallet (the

Kavaljer ranges from \$499 to \$529, and the Esbern is \$249). They also have the least amount of storage space and the smallest work surfaces, however.

The LinkWorks' ConSole (available at Eaton's) and Kinnarps' Zaap (from New Look Office Interiors) both include fold-out tables that double the work surface. They have their own light sources (currently an extra cost for the Zaap, but this may change, according to New Look), as well as storage space in the doors, memo boards, and locks. These extras come at a price, however: the ConSole is \$2,199 and the Zaap \$3,995.

ConSole offers a roll-out file cabinet for an additional \$299, but since this unit already has the most storage capacity, you may be able to delay the purchase of an extra drawer.



The Zaap, the most deluxe of the lot, is also the most self-contained. The doors are slightly peaked to enclose a chair when the workstation is shut. The Zaap has a finished back and a cable duct running the length of the interior, so the unit does not have to be placed against a wall because of unsightly cords or rough surfaces. It is also the only unit with wheels, making it ideal for larger open spaces, or settings where mobility is important.

The one thing that detracts from this unit is the awkward method of adjusting the keyboard surface height. Although it works smoothly, the metal crank that must be inserted in the table top looks out of place with this sleek design. The crank is also detachable—meaning it can be misplaced.

—Megan Johnston

Home office furnishing ... continued from page 15

Available in an extensive variety of mix-and-match sizes, with the option to add or remove components according to your budget and needs, the series offers excellent flexibility. While the adjustable legs allow for some ergonomic maneuverability (and come in handy for uneven floors), the lack of a keyboard pullout shelf is a serious drawback. (Although the Effektiv line does not offer a keyboard pullout unit, it does offer an adjustable monitor stand for \$199.95).

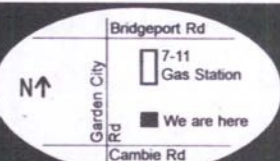
"This desk offers the same problem as the Steelcase desk, since the keyboard is on the same surface as the monitor," says Duffy. "But the curve of the desk is good in that it allows you to move the monitor forward and back."

Like the desks, the Effektiv storage units are available in a variety of mix-and-match sizes offering everything from drawers and shelves to roll-top fronts and quarter moon-shaped shelving units, which are ideal for corner placement. IKEA's two-level Effektiv beech veneer storage unit

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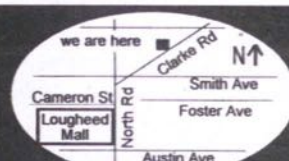
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digital workforce

Home office furnishing ...
continued from page 16

(\$268) provides an open top shelf with a lower shelf covered by a black roll-top front cover.

For additional storage, IKEA suggests the Helmer six-drawer unit (\$99). Available in either black lacquer or galvanized steel, the

drawers are excellent for storing office clutter. The unit can be fitted with handy castors, but some drawers tend to stick.

The Effektiv and Helmer units are the only diet soda budget options in the IKEA office furnishings department. The units are a good start, but provide limited storage as they lack a bookcase or any other large unit. (Unfortunately, the Effektiv line does not

offer a coordinating full-size bookcase).

The armless IKEA Maximal swivel chair (\$249) provides a gas lift mechanism for seat height adjustment from 40-52 cm, as well as seat tilt and depth adjustability. The upholstery is 100 percent wool and is available in a variety of colors.

"One very good feature this chair offers is seat pan depth," says Duffy. "The lack of

arms is not necessarily a bad thing, but if I were choosing a chair, I would choose one with arms because they are good to support the upper body weight when you are taking a break from your work."

The jewel of the IKEA office is the sturdy Antifoni desk lamp (\$79.95). Made of silver-

continued on page 28



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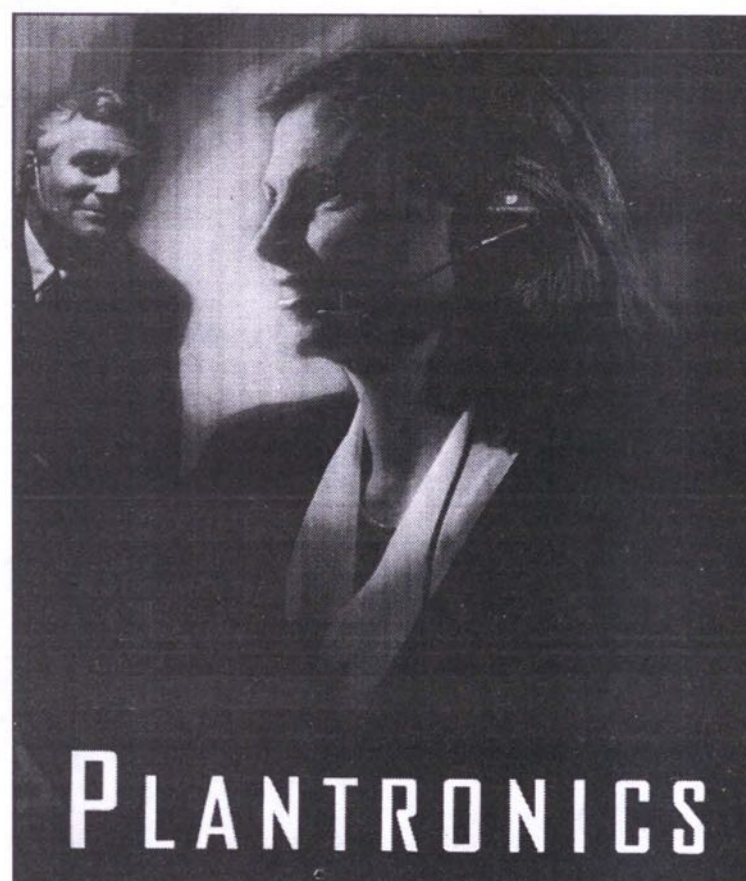
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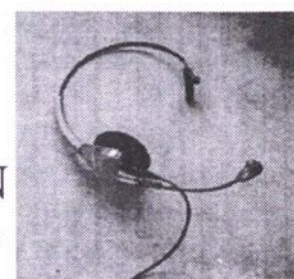
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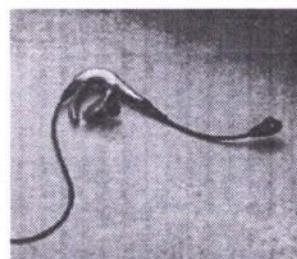
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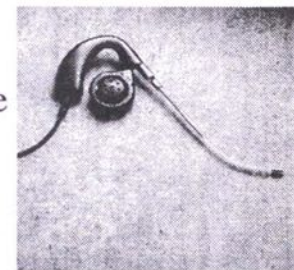
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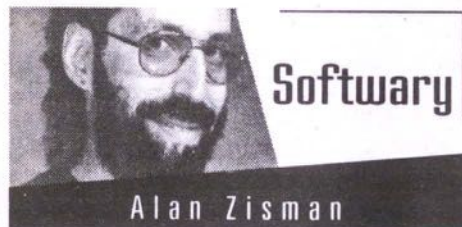
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The future according to Microsoft



Software

Alan Zisman

Dr. Daniel T. Ling is being paid to create the future. As director of Microsoft's \$2-billion research effort, he heads a team of 250 (expected to grow to 600 over the next three years), charged with exploring emerging trends in computer software, and with developing "new technologies for improving the way computers interact with people." He presented his vision as one of four keynote speakers at Vancouver's PacRim Comdex this past January.

Currently, Ling suggests, we use our computers as tools—in the future, they will become our assistants. This will be a dramatic change, more dramatic perhaps, than the change from a command-line DOS-style interface to the common graphical Mac/Windows

interface—a change that will make the user interface a human interface.

To make this possible will involve change in a variety of areas, all being actively pursued by Microsoft Research.

Instead of clicking and typing, Ling foresees the ability to hold a conversation with your computer. This will let you experience hands-free computing, an experience that voice-dictation software is starting to demonstrate. But the future, Ling suggests, will see computers that not only recognize individual words, but also understand the meaning of speech. To get there, Microsoft Research is having computers "read" entire dictionaries, creating a "semantic links database" attempting to map the connections between words. Add in a dollop of probability theory, and you get a computer that begins to be able to know that in the sentence "I saw the Grand Canyon flying to Arizona," it wasn't the Grand Canyon that was doing the flying.

This research has already begun to pay off. As far back as Office 95's Answer Wizard, Microsoft Research was working with these

concepts, exploring what words actual users would use to ask questions about what concepts, in order to (on a good day) enable the help engine respond appropriately to natural language questions.

More recently, their research has been implemented in Office 97's grammar checker. Ling expects it will soon appear in Web search engines that, by adding some understanding of the meaning of words in a query, should be able to cut down on the thousands of false responses that show up in too many of today's searches.

Ling expects this to bring us "software software," making PCs seem more intelligent.

That requires that they be able to cope better with uncertainties, by being able to evaluate which response is the most probable, and to "learn" from our interaction with them.

Microsoft also wants your computer to see you. In the near future, they suggest that many computers will be equipped with cameras for videoconferencing. That gives users the hardware needed to allow your computer to respond to your motions and facial expressions... "all" that's needed is the software. Current experiments include screensavers that turn themselves off when someone approaches.

continued on page 28

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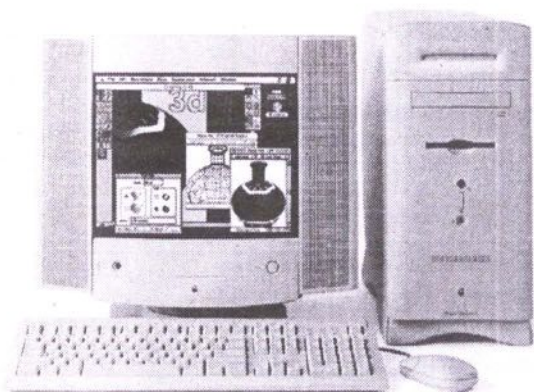
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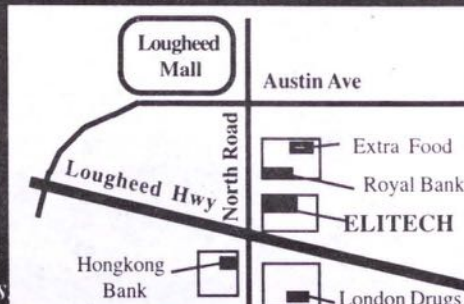
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Alan Thwaits

National economies are dead! Long live globalization! Two of Canada's Big Six banks are planning to merge, saying this is the only way they can be competitive in a global market. Much of the software you use for your business is written in southern India, although the software companies themselves are based in North America. Offshore databanks track who you are, what you spend, and where you travel, and then sell the information to market research companies in Canada. Many of the cartoons your kids watch on Saturday morning are crafted in the Philippines for studios in the United States. Welcome to the future—it's already here!

And the future—make no mistake about it—is globally based. There's no room anymore for those who believe that their businesses cover only local needs, and respond only to local markets. Whether you're a desk-top publisher, a financial consultant, or a freelance journalist, it's critical to your success that you understand that it's a global marketplace you're dealing with.

At first glance, that news might seem like the kiss of death to the self employed. The world "out there" has, in the past, always belonged to the competition, the folks with lots of staff, a diversified product line, and multi-million dollar budgets—the very antithesis of who you are. That was then, however, and this is now. A very different time and place, and a very exciting one for the SOHOer (small officer, home office operator).

Grooving to the alternative

To understand why this is good news, let's go back a few years. The small business, owner-operated phenomenon had its beginnings in local markets and local networks. You were who you were because small was how you worked. Early SOHO businesses were, in a sense, an outgrowth of the counterculture of the 1960s—they were very much a conscious alternative to big business.

As SOHOing grew, however, the world was changing, too. In its early years—let's say the early 1980s—the self-employed, owner-operated movement was very much the exception to the rule. The rule wasn't much different than it had been in the 1950s—the company that hired you gave you annual raises and a pension, and offered an unwritten guarantee of continuing employment.

The changes of the late 1980s and the early 1990s changed the way the world worked, however. Now, there is no job security. Venerated institutions change their core busi-

nesses overnight, jettisoning both employees and customers in the process. There seem to be fewer companies doing business, because those that do have larger annual budgets than some nations. And the stirring of a butterfly's wing—a currency devaluation in a country whose name you couldn't pronounce last week—can cause a storm halfway around the world, dropping the Canadian dollar to an all-time low.

Where's the good news in all that, you might ask.

The good news

To begin with, the technologically savvy SOHOer has access to the same world markets as the competition—the Internet, particularly, means geography is transparent and time zones almost meaningless. The tools that will span time and distance are cheap, easy to use, and affordable. While access to those tools is still somewhat less expensive if you live in or near a large urban centre, there's no reason why markets in Korea, the United States, or Venezuela can't be explored from, for example, your office in a small town in Saskatchewan. Flat-rate long-distance carriers are hungry for your business, and fax and voice technologies are being married to Internet access. Why not be a world presence?


Secondly, as an aggressively marketed SOHO, you have access to the same world markets as the competition. More than ever before, quality counts. Working with tools that give you daily, 24-hour access to your customers (and they to you), you can both excel at what you do, and offer value-added services that the competition perhaps can't. Answer your email promptly. Get yourself an toll-free number. Find someone who will create a standout, interactive Web site where you can strut your stuff. But be warned—it's not enough just to look good. More than ever, customer loyalty is based on service. The world is moving at lightning speed, and an unhappy customer will move on before you have time to do any damage control.

Be happy

Lastly, let's recognize an intangible plus to SOHOing that will help you maintain in the face of any economic storm. It's called satisfaction. If you're doing what you do best, making a decent living doing it, and carving out a place in the sun for the business that's you, you must be doing something very right. And that sense of rightness usually translates into a positive attitude, which in turn translates into success. Wisdom, a sense of peace, and profit, too! Who says you can't be a contender on the world stage? ♦


Alan Thwaits is a freelance journalist who specializes in mobile computing and online technologies. He can be reached at nomad@praxcomm.com.

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Sandra Mingail

Online jewels for SOHO workers

Eight a.m., Monday, congestion grows on the highways, as commuters begin their week. A steady stream of workers flow into concrete towers and begin their ascent to

corporate offices. For more and more Canadians, however, the work week begins by stepping foot into a home office just metres from their bedroom. More than two million

Canadians operate a home-based or small business, with a projected growth rate of 25 percent per year until 2000.

Most SOHO (small office, home office) workers will agree working at home can be an isolating experience. There are no colleagues to commiserate with over coffee, no leisurely corporate lunches, no boss to remind you of deadlines. SOHOers must possess a hefty dose of discipline and self-motivation.

But thanks to computer technology, a reliable service provider, and a speedy modem, the home-office worker can now access treasure troves of information. In fact, with the proper business, communication, and organizational skills, a one-person home operation can now conduct an international business from their desktop.

Somewhat perturbing, though, is that one can run a home-based business, interact with customers and clients, and provide product or services with very little face-to-face contact with humans. Why bother standing in line at the bank, when you can conduct online banking in your pajamas, at midnight? Need the latest business news? No need to partake in chitchat with the newsstand attendant—just wait for the latest headlines from your favourite push technology to dance across your screen. Can't hop a plane to next week's annual conference and exhibit? Not to worry. The keynote addresses and exhibitor contact information will be posted online. Of course, if you really yearn for human companionship, you can always schedule a video conference and implement a virtual think-tank session.

Canadian SOHO online resources

Curious to discover what resources exist for SOHO workers, I conducted a quick online search. The Entrepreneurial Edge for Business Resources, a service of the Edward Lowe Foundation, provided a one-stop source for excellent links (<http://www.edgeonline.com/main/resource/page/index2.shtml>). I clicked on the Federal Business Information System link. This is a collection of documents with information on business-related programs, services, and regulations. It's an excellent place to access information from all federal departments that are partners in the Canadian Business Service Centres initiative.

You can browse federal government programs and services aimed at small and medium-size businesses by categories, such as communications, aerospace, and manufacturing. There are links for start-ups, import or export companies, and research and development. Concerned with intellectual property issues? Search the Canadian patents database or read details on copyright. Should you require training, there are listings of employment counselling centres and special initiatives, such as the Experience Canada program—a 10-month career development program for 18 to 29 year olds.

The Canadian SOHO directory (<http://www.ridgeco.com/soho/sohodir.html/#public>) is a relatively new site that lists service

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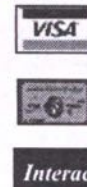
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Column

Power User

continued from page 24

categories and the SOHO people who deliver them. Current listings include computer consultants, insurance specialists, financial services—even dog breeders. Add your own company contact information at no charge. Also try Canadian SOHO Business Group (<http://www.soho.ca>).

Recent graduates would be wise to peruse the Canadian Youth Business Foundation Web site—a comprehensive resource concerning pilot programs and funding for youth entrepreneurial ventures. Youth business resources are organized by province and are clickable through an image map of Canada.

Software to work smarter

Publisher Ziff Davis has compiled an excellent site with links to SOHO resources (<http://www5.zdnet.com/athome/content/hoffice/soho.htm>). Handy shareware includes Personal Information Managers to track your appointments and phone calls, electronic sticky notes for your computer screen, a talking calculator (in case you get *really* lonely), an inventory tool to catalogue your small business inventory, and a bulk-mail utility. And you may want to download the goal-maker software—to help you set those long-range business goals.

And since you'll likely be conducting a good portion of your business over the Internet, you'll want to check out the latest software for faxing, phoning, and collaborating over the World Wide Web.

Funding that big idea

As any seasoned entrepreneur will attest, a written business plan is a key component to securing the financial backing to support a business idea. Bplans.com is a Palo Alto software firm that develops business and marketing-plan software. Its Web site (<http://www.bplans.com/index1.html>) hosts some helpful hints on how to outline a business plan. Better yet, you can browse through sample online business plans or submit your business plan for review.

The online version of the television show, *Money Hunt* (<http://www.moneyhunter.com/default.htm>), is another excellent site to bookmark. Among the site's many resources, you'll find a column that provides advice on how to approach investors and an online service for matching entrepreneurs and investors. If financial jargon has got you puzzled, try the Investorspeak Decoder—an online financial translator that lets you enter a word, then links to its definition. ♦

Sandra, a Toronto-based computer consultant, can be reached at mingail@idirect.com.

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56K draft standard accepted

High-speed modem connectivity has taken a step forward with the approval in early February of the V.90 draft standard for 56Kbps modems by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). This paves the way for modem manufacturers to put an end to the X2 versus K56Flex incompatibility problems, and to release products that can communicate with any other V.90-compliant modem at 56Kbps.

Anticipating this, 3Com and Lucent announced interoperability testing between their products in January, and have invited other modem manufacturers to participate. Most manufacturers have promised purchasers of their proprietary 56K modems free upgrades to the new standard, which could be available as early as late February. New V.90 modems are expected in March.

The standard is expected to receive final

approval at the September ITU meeting.

"With a draft formal standard completed, [V.90] modems will quickly become the most common way to access Internet networks, and are likely to remain so for some time," according to Kent Krechmer, editor of *Communications Standards Review*.

According to modem manufacturers Hayes, Cisco Systems, and Ascend Communications, however, there's still work to be done before they release new V.90 products. Implementations differ among vendors, so compatibility testing among modem vendors and Internet service providers must be completed. 3Com is spearheading this effort with its V.pcm Interoperability Testing Program, offering client modem developers dial-in access to servers, and reciprocating by calling other manufacturers' servers with its client modems.—Lynn Greiner

Software...

continued from page 19

es the computer, and a tic-tac-toe game that lets a player mark a square just by looking at it.

Future interfaces will involve 3D and video, making a computing environment that perhaps will owe more to the current crop of Nintendo 64 games than to the look and feel of (say) Windows 98. Right now, a freely available product of Microsoft Research is Comic Chat—changing the way Internet chat rooms work, by evolving the interface from lines of text to a familiar comic book metaphor. Coming up will be 3D V-Chat, turning the flat, 2D comic strip environment into a richer, 3D setting more like a video game.

On another level, Microsoft Research hopes to bring us the world... literally. Along with Digital Equipment, they're involved in Terra Server, a project to bring the entire world online. No, not by giving us all Internet connections, but by posting a multi-terabyte

(that's trillions of bytes) database of images of the Earth, obtained both from U.S. Geological Survey flights and Russian satellite pictures. Users will be able to close-focus in on the images, down to an ultimate resolution of 1 to 2 square meters—in other words, be able to see actual cars parked in the street in front of your house (at least at the time the picture was taken).

Look for Terra Server to be available on-line soon—perhaps by the time this article appears in print.

Increasingly powerful, affordable computers will power a change from computer as word-processor productivity tool to computer as more human-seeming, intelligent, adaptive (as well as simpler) communications and collaboration assistant.

Should be fun!

(Check in with Microsoft Research at <http://research.microsoft.com>) ♦

Alan Zisman can be contacted by email at azisman@mail.bc.rogers.wave.ca.

Home office furnishing ...

continued from page 17

lacquered steel with an adjustable arm and head, and a 20-watt halogen bulb, the lamp helps to add a cool dash of style to this office suite.

"Although both offices need accessories,

such as an articulating keyboard arm and a document holder, I don't have a real problem with the IKEA office," says Duffy.

"However, with the Steelcase office, you are not getting a tenfold increase in features for the price difference.

"This is a shame because Steelcase has some nice items."

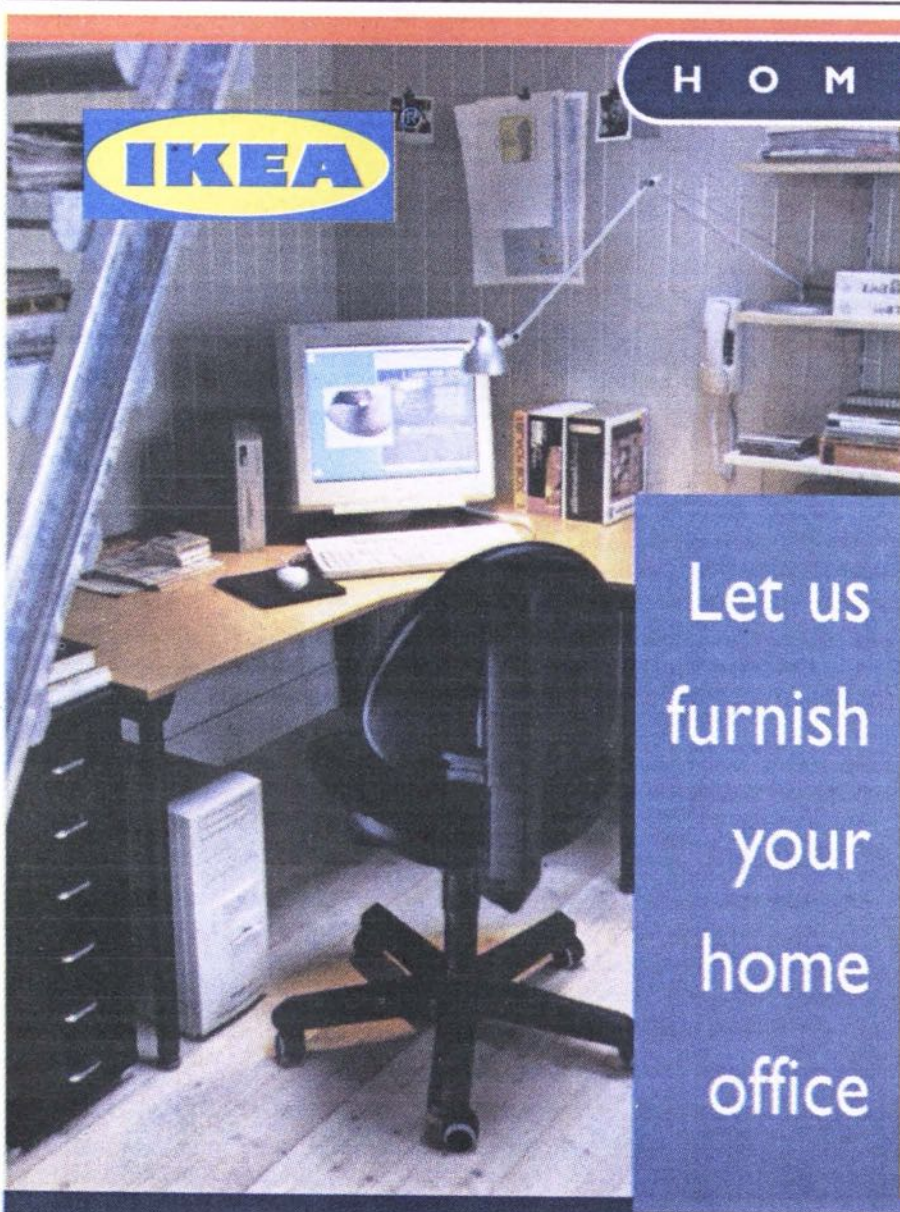
We're looking at you, kid

So which office is better? It depends on your individual needs and your budget. If, for example, you require an impressive suite for entertaining clients, you may wish to consider the Rapport suite or one of Steelcase's other offerings.

But if you have a tiny budget, and simple

require furnishings to provide work space and organize office clutter, the IKEA units may suit you better.

But you should keep in mind that additional items, such as visitor chairs to window coverings, could spill over your budget, whether you are drinking from a champagne glass or a soda can. ♦



Let us furnish your home office

HOME OFFICE CONTEST

Enter the contest by providing *Computer Player!* with your wish list of IKEA home-office products that total \$1,000.

IKEA will provide the winner with his or her personal home office furniture worth up to \$1,000 (shipping and installation provided). To make your selection, see the home-office items featured on page 14 or call 1-888-225-4532 Ext. 130 to receive a catalogue of IKEA business products.

Please address your entry form to: **IKEA Home Office Contest**, and fax to: 604-608-2686 or mail to 503-425 Carrall St., Vancouver, B.C., V6B 6E3, by April 24, 1998.

HOME OFFICE CONTEST ENTRY FORM

- Name: _____
- Phone: _____
- Address: _____
- Please indicate your age: ☐ Under 18 ☐ 18 - 34 ☐ 35 - 49 ☐ 50 - 64 ☐ 65 or older
- How do you use your home office? (Check all that apply)

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Household management or homework | <input type="checkbox"/> Your own for-profit business | <input type="checkbox"/> Moonlighting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bringing work home from a central office | <input type="checkbox"/> Not-for-profit business | <input type="checkbox"/> Telecommuting |
- Do you subscribe to an online service? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Have you ever made a purchasing decision based on info you read in *CC!*?

| | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, my decision was based on | <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising | <input type="checkbox"/> Editorial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | | |
- My \$1,000 IKEA home office consists of: (Please list name & value of each item selected.)

| | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

Prize: One IKEA home office with a retail value of 1,000 (one thousand) dollars. Value does not include taxes, delivery service, or assembly service. Delivery service will be provided by IKEA depending on the winner's geographic proximity to the store. Prize must be claimed at an IKEA store by May 31st 1998. Winner must provide valid identification upon claiming prize. The prize awarded is not transferable and cannot be redeemed as cash.

Eligibility: To enter and to be eligible to win, a person must be a resident of Canada, over the age of majority, and not an employee or be domiciled with an employee of Canada Computes, its affiliate companies, or advertising and promotional agencies. Employees or individuals domiciled with employees of IKEA, its affiliate companies, or advertising and promotional agencies are also not eligible to enter this contest.

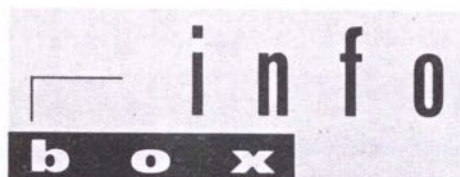
Selection process: The winner will be selected at random by Canada Computes on May 1, 1998 from among all qualifying entries received on or before contest close date and must meet eligibility requirements. Winner will be contacted by telephone for one week and if s/he cannot be contacted, another entrant will be selected at random.

Taking your access on the road

BY ALAN THWAITS

Everyone seems to be on the move these days. Whether it's March break or business travel, the roads, planes, and trains are busier than ever. And, because we're living in the Information Age, folks want to stay connected. Why, oh why, they say, should I have to give up my email and Web habits just because I'm not at home?

They're absolutely right—being mobile doesn't have to mean being unconnected. And it's now easier and cheaper than ever to have your mail and move it, too. Here are



CompuServe,
http://www.compuserve.com
AOL, http://aol.com
IBM.NET, http://www.ibm.net
Internet Direct,
http://www.idirect.com/ipass
Email: roaming@idirect.com

some of the options available to the business or casual user of Internet access.

A tried and true option for staying connected is one of the major online services. The only ones that really matter these days are CompuServe and AOL. That's partly because they've combined a large number of world-wide access points (CompuServe, offers connectivity from more than 185 countries) with ease of use. Pricing for a basic access package for both AOL and Compuserve is US\$9.95 per month.

If you are connecting for business purposes, you may want to subscribe to one of the "big business" ISPs, such as IBM.NET. This service was recently voted top Internet provider by *PC World* magazine. It offers access from more than 1,070 IBM local dial-in numbers in over 50 countries, including over 550 local dial numbers in the United States and Canada. As an added bonus, most of those local access points provide service with speeds up to 56Kbps. IBM.NET's Canada Comprehensive Plan will cost you \$29.95 per month for 100 hours, and \$2 per hour over that maximum.

Roamin' empire

Some users don't want to hook up to a national provider, preferring to use the services of a local ISP. In the past, that loyalty meant you'd be lost in the ozone when outside of the ISP's area. In order to offer customers enhanced service, many medium-sized ISPs now offer roaming services, such as iPass, a new service being marketed by Toronto-based Internet Direct. If you're an IDirect subscriber using iPass, you get the best of both worlds—the personal service of a smaller ISP and access from 1,450 points of presence in 150 countries.

When you're on the road, simply fire up your iPass Wizard software, and dial in to a local provider on the iPass system. Costs are

based on hourly use—\$4 per hour for Canada and U.S. sites, \$5.25 to \$9 per hour for international sites, and \$15 per hour for some

"remote" international points.

With a little planning, and some help from the Internet, you can take it with you! ♦

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The Mac gets a little respect

BY ALAN ZISMAN

They say confession is good for the soul. So I'd like to start off with a few. Like 90 percent or so of the world's computer users, I use Microsoft Windows. Unlike many of you, I've been using various versions of Windows for about a decade now, starting way back before it became the world's standard computer interface (let's save the debate on whether Microsoft is too powerful for another time, okay?).

I'm aware that an awful lot of what works well in Windows is copied from Apple's Macintosh. When I first started out using Windows, there was a series of ads from graphics-software company Micrografx promoting line of products for Windows users with "Mac envy" (I'm also aware that much of what works well on the Mac originated at Xerox's Palo Alto Research Centre).

Over the years, while Windows has been my primary computing platform, I've tried to remain reasonably familiar with Macs. While I've owned and continually upgraded PC machines running various generations of Windows, however, I've never owned a Mac. As much as possible, I've tried to be sensitive

to including Mac issues in my writing, but as a non-Mac owner, my perspective has inevitably been limited at best.

So, I went out and got myself a belated Christmas present. Contrary to current marketing trends, I bought a Mac. At this point, I've had the machine for about a month, so I can't present myself as any kind of an expert. My machine came with Mac OS version 7.5.3, not the new, fancy OS 8 and I haven't yet upgraded the operating system, so any comments may be specific to that older version. But here are a few first impressions.

Similar features

More things are similar than different between my Mac and my Windows 95 systems—the same applications, reading the same data files, working the same way. Most things work the way I'd expect them to. As a Windows user, it takes practice to remember to hold the mouse button down to keep menus down (something that, I gather, OS 8 changes). Windows 3.1 is noticeably clunkier than the Mac, but the Win95 interface and long file names make the two systems pretty

similar, at least on the surface.

With the Mac's PC Exchange system software, it's easy to move files from the PC to the Mac, and most standard applications can read data from either platform. Add-ons like DataViz's Conversions Plus on the PC and MacLink Plus on the Mac translate between less-common file formats (and MacLink allows serial-port connections to shuttle back and forth files that are too big to fit onto a floppy).

Much about the Mac's interface is, as its proponents have always claimed, elegant and intuitive. But as with the PC, there are also some things that are not particularly user-friendly. Does anyone discover on their own that Command+Shift+3 takes a screen shot? Is that more intuitive than the equivalent PrintScreen command in Windows?

Software and hardware add-ons are harder to find, as the Mac market shrinks. Adding RAM and an Ethernet card cost more on the Mac than for the PC.

I've had my share of system crashes and freezes, and had to struggle to discover which extension was incompatible with what soft-

ware. Some Windows users imagine that the Mac is more stable—I'm afraid not.

No right

There are things about Win95 I miss on the Mac: right-clicking to bring up context menus (also added in OS 8); the Control Panel's Device Manager, showing settings for all installed hardware; the Start Menu and Taskbar (which, ironically, can be added to the Mac with the shareware GoMac utility).

There's always been a love-hate relationship between Windows and Macintosh. The Mac did it first, and in many ways better; Windows started late, went through an awkward adolescence, but has grown up to dominate most areas of the market. As a result, many Mac users' attitudes towards the competition have evolved from amusement, to scorn, to a kind of fear. All of us have benefited over the years from a strong Apple. I hope the company manages to prosper.

Has the Mac stolen my heart? Is it so obviously superior or more fun that it will become my primary computer for work or play? I don't think so. It is, however, a solid platform that I will continue to use, and that deserves better than it's received, both from the press and from the market. ♦



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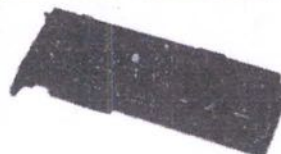
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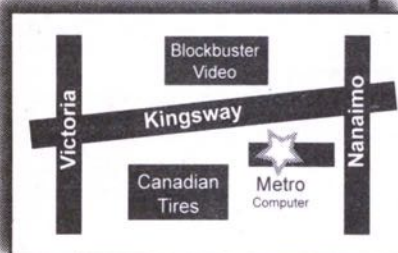
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Column

Installing multiple operating systems



**Linfield's
Line**

Kevin Linfield

My review of Caldera's OpenDOS (see <http://www.toronto-computes.com>) has generated quite a bit of email from the readers asking me for information about installing many different operating systems on their PCs. The following is an introduction to multiple operating systems, but I will be sharing more of my knowledge on this subject at random intervals over the next few months.

Before beginning

Before you start, back up everything! Make sure you know the type and model numbers of your hardware (CD-ROM, video, hard drive, mouse, and so on) and ensure that your hardware is compatible with all of the operating systems.

In most situations, you will want to install each operating system on its own hard drive partition. This means you need some method of repartitioning your hard drive(s) and some way to choose which operating system will boot. For repartitioning without destroying all of your data, I highly recommend PowerQuest's Partition Magic (<http://www.powerquest.com>), although there are a few freeware programs that claim to do this also (try the DOS programs FIPS or PRESZ111.ZIP at <http://www.simtel.com/archive/index.htm>).

Partition Magic also comes with IBM's Boot Manager (included with OS/2), which is an excellent boot utility (and the one I use), while Windows NT and Linux (with its Linux Loader (LILO)) both include a boot loader that can be configured for multiple operating systems. Of course, there are many commercial, shareware, or freeware booting programs available; if you are not going to run NT, Linux, or OS/2, check them out first. Recall that your BIOS starts the boot process by accessing the Master Boot Record (MBR), which can contain the boot process for a single operating system (like DOS or Win95) or a booting utility like Boot Manager or LILO.

OS quirks

Microsoft's operating systems like to be on your first primary partition (for a detailed explanation of primary/logical partitions, see next month's column). OS/2 and Linux can easily be installed anywhere (logical or primary partition on any hard drive) as long as you have Boot Manager or LILO configured properly. Note that if you are installing OS/2 on anything other than your first primary partition, you must install Boot Manager first (you can replace it after the install).

I always have each operating system on its native file system—this means FAT with DOS, FAT or FAT32 for Windows 95, NTFS for Windows NT, HPFS for OS/2, and EXT2FS for Linux. Since all of these operating systems can read and write to FAT partitions, I recommend having a separate FAT partition for sharing data between all operating systems. Of course, third-party device drivers exist for accessing different file systems from various operating systems—check out your favourite shareware/freeware site—but this is not recommended for regular access.

Another thing to note is that all Microsoft operating systems will disable LILO or Boot Manager when installing. No need to panic—just run FDISK (from whichever OS) to re-enable your boot program or boot from floppy disk and reinstall the boot loader.

Planning your hard drive

Even though you can install OS/2, Linux, Windows 95, and Windows NT onto your existing FAT DOS partition, I strongly recommend keeping everything separate so files aren't accidentally modified or replaced, and for ease of updating. As such, I have my first hard drive partitioned into three primary partitions (each being a C: drive, and each hidden from the other two) for OpenDOS/Windows 3.1, Windows 95, and Windows NT, and my second hard drive partitioned into four logical partitions (one for FAT data to share between all operating systems, one for OS/2, one for Linux, and one for Linux swap space). I use OS/2's Boot Manager to give me the choice of which operating system to start, although LILO would be my second choice.

For users who only have one hard drive, you may want to consider installing NT onto a logical drive, and having it start the boot process from your DOS or Windows 95 partition, and instead of using Boot Manager (which occupies a primary partition) use a commercial program like System Commander or one of the many shareware/freeware ones.

Vicious upgrade cycle

Most of the time, users want to install an upgrade over their existing (older) version. While this may initially save some time and effort, I feel that it would be detrimental in the long run.

I'm sure everyone has installed many programs that are no longer used, or have encountered "uninstall" routines that fail to uninstall an application. Whenever I upgrade (say from OS/2 3.0 to 4.0), I always back up everything, reformat the partition, and create a fresh install (one of the advantages of having separate boot partitions!). Yes, I usually have to install my applications again (especially in any flavour of Windows or Win-OS/2) but the response of the system is significant.

continued on page 36

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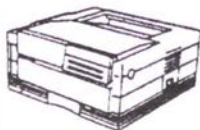
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- (USR Spt 33.6 / 56K Voice.....+\$120/160
- (Ultra-IDE: 4.3G/6.4G/8.0G.....+\$40/150/250
- (17" SVGA 1280/ 15GS.....+\$240/180
- (Optquest V773/V775.....+\$380/440
- (Viewsonic G771/G773/P775.....+\$420/440/560
- (Stereo speaker w.ac 80W/160W.....+\$15/45

ATX MMX-Systems

- Intel P5MMX166/200...\$1410/1470
- Intel P5MMX 233mhz.....\$1570
- AMD K6MMX166/200..\$1390/1460
- AMD K6MMX 233mhz.....\$1530
- Cyrix 6xMX166/200.....\$1350/1430

ATX, Intel 430TX chipset, 512k PBC
SDRAM-DIMM 32MB 10ns 168pin
UltraIDE 4.3GB Ultra-IDE 33/DMA
Mystique 220 3D 4MB PCI w/MPEG
1.44 Fujitsu floppy
NEC A500 / Sony100ES 15" SVGA
17" Hilevel ATX tower case w/ 230 power
Fujitsu 104 win95 KB and Logitech Mouse

Optional:

- (24x /32x cd-rom eide.....+\$90/120
- (Creative SB16/64.....+\$50/95
- (Creative 33.6K/56K Voice.....+\$65/105
- (USR Spt 33.6 / 56K Voice.....+\$120/160
- (Ultra-IDE: 4.3G/6.4G/8.0G.....+\$40/150/250
- (NEC E500/A700/E700.....+\$80/320/440
- (Optquest V773/V775/V95.....+\$200/280/1050
- (Viewsonic G771/G773/P775.....+\$220/260/380
- (Altec ACS45 /55 Speakers&Subwoofer...+\$110/200

Pentium-II Systems

- Intel PII 233/266mhz..\$1320/1490
- Intel PII 300/333mhz..\$1730/1990

Intel 440LX based Intel AL440LX /Asus P2L97
32MB SDRAM Dimm 168pin 10ns
4.3G Ultra/33M UIDE HD
AGP 3D 4MB with EPEG
1.44G FD Fujitsu
17" ATX tower case w/ ATX power
104K Fujitsu keyboard
MicroSoft mouse / Logitech MouseMan

- Dual PII 233mhz (two CPUs)...\$1940
- Dual PII 266mhz (two CPUs)...\$2300
- Dual PII 300mhz (two CPUs)...\$2760
- Dual PII 333mhz (two CPUs)...\$3280

Optional:

- (SDRAM 64MB / 128MB+\$80/340
- (ATI xpert@play 4M / 8M AGP.....+\$150/260
- (Mystique220 4M PCI+\$60
- (Millennium-II 4M PCI / AGP.....+\$130/150
- (#9 Resolution AGP 4M AGP.....+\$240
- (SB AWE64 / Gold / PCI Sound.....+\$95/240/80
- (24x /32x CD-ROM+\$90/\$120
- (ViewSonic G771/ P775 / P815.....+\$600/780/1800
- (Sony200ES/200GS/400PS.....+\$720/920/1540

Pentium Pro (P6)

Intel P6-180/200mhz...\$1150/1500

- Intel Venus 440FX 2S,1P,EIDE, ATX
- 32M EDO 72pin 60ns
- FD 1.44G
- 3.2GB eide HD Mode 4
- Mystique220 3D 4MB w/MPEG
- 17" ATX Tower case w/ATX power
- Fujitsu 8725 104 win95 keyboard
- Logitech mouse w/pad

Intel Dual Pro-180mhz x 2...\$1500

Intel Dual Pro-200mhz x 2...\$2300

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Quantum

- 4.3/6.4 SE...\$280/360
- 4.5/9.1 UW...\$650/980



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NETWORKS / UPS

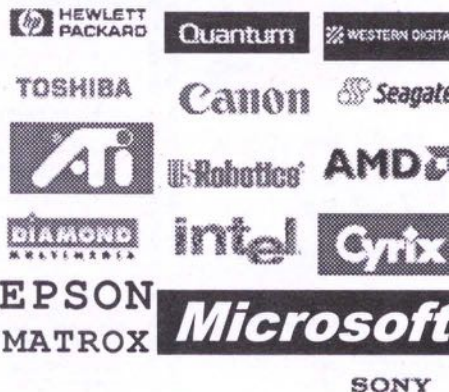
- 16 bit ISA comb Ethernet.....\$28
- 32 bit PCI comb Ethernet.....\$32
- Intel ISA / PCI pro 10+.....\$70/95
- Intel PCI Pro 10/100.....\$95
- 3COM PCI 3C900 comb 10BT.....\$120
- 3COM PCI 3C905 100BT.....\$85
- BNC/Terminator/T.....\$3
- Coxal 10ft/20ft/50ft.....\$10/13/25
- cabling tools\$60

- Hub 9port /16port 10BT.....\$90/180
- Hub 100BT 8/12/16port.....\$260/560/1360
- Hub OfficeConnect 3C16700 8P.....\$110
- Hub OfficeConnect 3C16710 8P.....\$530
- 3C16440-12p ..\$370 3C16441-24p..\$580
- 3C16405-40p..\$680 3C16675-48p..\$2850
- Hub 100BT 3C16720 8P.....\$650
- Hub 100BT 3C250B/TX 12port.....\$1400
- Hub D-Link 8port/16port.....\$110/200
- Hub D-Link 16port/24port.....\$230/380

- Novell Users 5 / 10.....\$780/1800
- Novell Users 25/ 50.....\$2320/2880
- NT 4.0 Server 5 /10\$950/1300
- NT 4.0 client access license/each.....\$45
- NT Workstation 4.0 / license.....\$280/ \$60
- MS Backoffice server V2.0/2.5..\$2200/3100
- MS SMS v.1.2 10/25 users.....\$1420/2200
- MS SNA v.3.0 w/5 users.....\$1680

- UPS 200/280/400/450.....\$128/145/190/200
- UPS 600/900/1250.....\$280/450/620
- UPSPro280/420/650/1000..\$200/330/400/520
- UPSSmart 450/700/1000.....\$380/490/660
- UPSSmart 1400/2200/3000..\$820/1420/2290
- SurgeArrest Person 7/ w-tel\$25/30
- SurgeArrest Pro 7/ w-tel\$37/47
- SurgeArrest Net 7/ w-tel\$40/55

ATIC: Authorized by



- OKIDATA
- Okipage 4W 600dpi...\$280
- Okidata 6E 600dpi...\$415

- Brother
- 730DX\$400
- 760DX\$510

- HP
- 692C...\$300
- 6L.....\$510

NEC Shopper

- NEC A500/E500/M500 15".....\$425/490/550
- NEC A700/E700/M700 17".....\$760/880/970
- NEC P750 /P1150 1600x1280 .25..\$1050/\$2050

Intel Centre !!

- Intel CPU P5MMX166/200/233..\$155/198/315
- Intel CPU PII-233/266.....\$420/585
- Intel CPU PII-300/333.....\$810/1095
- Intel Venus 440FX ATX Pro M/B.....\$140
- Intel LT430TX ATX MMX M/B.....\$160
- Intel AL440LX ATX PII M/B.....\$245
- Intel DK440LX ATX Dual-PII UW/Lan....\$690

ViewSonic

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|-------|-----|---------------|-------|
| E665 | 15" | .28 1280X1024 | \$380 |
| 15GS | 15" | .27 1280x1024 | \$410 |
| V773 | 17" | .26 1280x1024 | \$590 |
| G771 | 17" | .27 1280x1024 | \$600 |
| G773 | 17" | .26 1280x1024 | \$660 |
| V775 | 17" | .28 1600x1280 | \$690 |
| P775 | 17" | .25 1600x1280 | \$790 |
| PT775 | 17" | .25 1600x1280 | \$940 |
| V95 | 19" | .26 1600x1280 | 1035 |
| G790 | 19" | .26 1600x1280 | 1100 |
| P810 | 21" | .25 1600x1280 | 1560 |
| P815 | 21" | .25 1800x1400 | 1800 |

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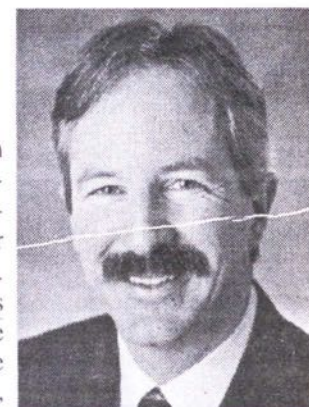
New Compaq head a real tiger

BY DAVID ROSEN

With sales and revenues at an all-time high, Compaq is the leader in the increasingly competitive

Canadian marketplace. A just-released International Data Corp. (IDC) Canada study found that Compaq Canada snagged the top

sales position for 1997, displacing long-standing leader IBM Canada. Compaq has also been the darling of the stock market, especially after the computer company announced it would purchase Tandem Computer Corp. (now completed) and Digital Equipment Corp. (expected to close by summer).



Clearly, these are good times for Compaq. To manage the integrated new company, Compaq recently introduced a new Canadian leader, Peter Ciceri. Born in Victoria, B.C., the 42-year-old has spent the last 13 years in Asia, holding increasingly significant positions at Tandem—most recently, as vice-president and managing director for Tandem Asia Pacific.

Hear me roar

Compaq's present success means Ciceri doesn't have to waste time fixing things. "We want to build revenues by 35 percent this year," Ciceri says. "This is the year of the tiger, and like the tiger we're going to be aggressive and operate from a position of strength."

Despite Compaq's enviable position, Ciceri's first year at Compaq Canada won't be a cakewalk. The company's proposed acquisition of Digital Equipment Corp. raises issues of possible large-scale layoffs of Canadian high-tech workers. Ciceri will have to stickhandle this potential powder keg through Compaq's Houston, Tex.-based board of directors.

Ciceri will also have to contend with the volatile low-end of the Canadian marketplace, where computer prices are expected to drop below \$1,000 this year. According to some analysts, a virtual "cola wars of computers" will drive retail prices still lower as manufacturers flood the market to gain market share.

Ciceri seems genuinely eager for the challenge. "My goal is that Compaq's Canadian sales will reach \$2 billion by the year 2000," he explains. Only time will tell if this tiger can keep Compaq purring along. ♦

Linfield's Line

continued from page 34

ly improved and I'm sure not to have extraneous DLL files taking up memory, or corrupted INI or registry files, and I know exactly where and what everything is on my system. If all of your important data is kept on a shared hard drive, then ideally that is the only one you have to back up frequently. ♦

Next month: Everything you wanted to know about hard drives but were afraid to ask! Kevin Linfield can be reached via email at linfield@idirect.com.

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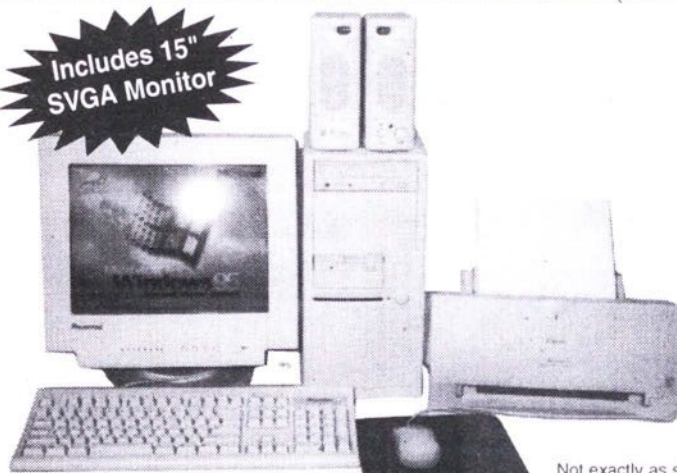
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- 24X CD ROM
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- WINDOWS 95 CD & MANUAL
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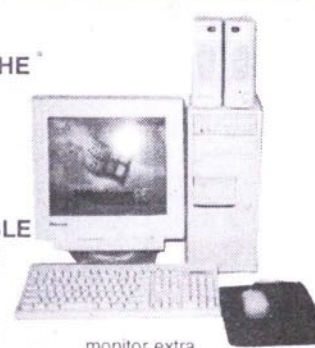


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- 32 MB SD RAM MEMORY
- 32X CD ROM
- ATI 3D EXPRESSION 4MB VIDEO CARD 64 BIT MOVIE CAPABLE
- 3.2 GB HARD DRIVE
- CREATIVE SOUND BLASTER
- 1.44 FLOPPY DRIVE
- 56K FAX MODEM/VOICE
- WIN 95 KEYBOARD & MOUSE
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- WINDOWS 95 CD & MANUAL

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monitor extra

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THE POWER Pentium® 166MHz MMX \$909

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|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| 512K Pipelined Burst Cache | C/W 16MB EDO RAM |
| 16MB EDO RAM | 24x CD-ROM Drive |
| 2.1GB U-ATA Hard Drive | 2.1GB U-ATA Hard Drive |
| 24x CD-ROM Drive | 14" Monitor |
| 16 bit Sound Chip on-board | 33.6 Voice Fax Modem |
| 60 Watts Stereo Speakers | |
| Panasonic 1.44MB Floppy Drive | P200MMX \$949 |
| 14" .28mm 1024x768 Monitor | P233MMX \$1059 |
| On-board 64bit graphic acc. | AMD K6-166MX \$909 |
| 101-Keys Keyboard | AMD K6-200MX \$949 |
| 15" Tower W/CSA P/S | AMD K6-233MX \$989 |
| 33.6 Int. Voice Fax Modem | IBM M2-200MX \$869 |
| 2-Button Mouse | IBM M2-233MX \$959 |
| Mouse Pad | |

Upgrades:

| | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 32MB EDO RAM | 15" 17" Monitor |
| 3.2GB Hard Drive | 32x CD-ROM Drive |

THE PERFORMANCE Pentium® 200MHz MMX \$1189

(Lease \$39/mo)* (Financing available)

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| 512K Pipelined Burst Cache | C/W 32MB EDO RAM |
| ASUS SP97-V Mainboard | 24x CD-ROM Drive |
| Built-in Video Chip | 15" monitor |
| 32MB EDO RAM | 33.6 Voice Fax Modem |
| 2.1GB U-ATA Hard Drive | |
| 24x CD-ROM Drive | P-166 MMX \$1149 |
| Sound Blaster 16 | P-233MMX \$1299 |
| 60 Watts Stereo Speakers | AMD K6-166MX \$1149 |
| 1.44MB Panasonic Floppy Drive | AMD K6-200MX \$1189 |
| 15" .28mm 1280x1024 Monitor | AMD K6-233MX \$1229 |
| 33.6 Int. Voice Fax Modem | IBM M2-200MX \$1109 |
| 101-Keys Keyboard | IBM M2-233MX \$1199 |
| 15" Tower Case w/ CSA P/S | |
| Logitech 3-Button MouseMan | |
| Mouse Pad | |

Upgrades:

| | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 3.2GB Hard Drive | 64MB EDO RAM |
| 17" Monitor | 32x CD-ROM Drive |

THE PROFESSIONAL Pentium® 200MHz MMX \$1539

(Lease \$50/mo)* (Financing available)

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 512K Pipelined Burst Cache | C/W 32MB SDIMM |
| Asus TXP4 mainboard | 24x CD-ROM, 15" monitor |
| Triton 430 TX Chipset | 56K Voice Fax Modem |
| 32MB SDIMM 168 pin | 3.2 GB U-ATA Hard Drive |
| 3.2GB U-ATA Hard Drive | |
| 24x CD-ROM Drive | P-166MMX \$1499 |
| Sound Blaster AWE 64 | P-233MMX \$1649 |
| 240 Watts Stereo Speakers | |
| 1.44MB Panasonic Floppy Drive | |
| 15" .28mm 1280x1024 Monitor | |
| ATI 3D Xp+ 2MB w/MPEG | |
| Fujitsu Win95 Keyboard | |
| 19" Tower w/ CSA P/S | |
| 56K Int. Voice Fax Modem | |
| Logitech 3-Button MouseMan | |
| Mouse Pad | |

Upgrades:

| | |
|-------------|------------------|
| 64MB SDIMM | 4.3GB HD |
| 17" Monitor | 32x CD-ROM Drive |

Multi-Media
Internet connected

Multi-Media
Internet connected

| |
|-------------------------------|
| 1MB Pipelined Burst Cache |
| 32MB SDIMM 168pin |
| 2.1GB U-ATA Hard Drive |
| 24x CD-ROM Drive |
| On-board Sound Chip |
| 120 Watts Stereo Speakers |
| 1.44MB Panasonic Floppy Drive |
| 15" .28mm 1280x1024 Monitor |
| S3 Virge 3D 2MB with MPEG |
| 101-Keys Keyboard |
| 15" Tower W/CSA P/S |
| 33.6K Int. Voice Fax Modem |
| Logitech 3-button MouseMan |
| Mouse Pad |

Ultimate Pentium MMX 233MHz MMX \$1309

(Lease \$43/mo)* (Financing available)

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| P-166MMX \$1159 | C/W: |
| P-200MMX \$1199 | 32MB SDIMM |
| AMD K6-166MX \$1159 | 15" Monitor |
| AMD K6-200MX \$1199 | 33.6 Voice Fax Modem |
| AMD K6-233MX \$1239 | 24x CD-ROM Drive |
| IBM M2-200MX \$1119 | |
| IBM M2-233MX \$1209 | |

Upgrades:

| | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 64MB SDIMM 168pin | 3.2GB HD |
| 17" Monitor | 32x CD-ROM Drive |

All Systems come with 33.6 or 56K Voice Fax Modem & one month (50 hours) FREE internet access, with E-mail address, no set-up cost.

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| Intel 440LX Chipset |
| A Bit P6LX Mainboard |
| 32MB SDIMM 168 pin |
| 4.3GB U-ATA Hard Drive |
| 24x CD-ROM Drive |
| Sound Blaster AWE64 |
| GNT 5000 sub-w/woofer system |
| 1.44MB Panasonic Floppy Drive |
| 15" .28mm 1280x1024 Monitor |
| Diamond Viper 4MB SGRAM AGP |
| Fujitsu Win95 Keyboard |
| 19" ATX Tower w/ CSA P/S |
| 56K Int. Voice Fax Modem |
| Microsoft Intellipoint PS/2 Mouse |
| Mouse Pad |

Ultra Pentium® II 233MHz \$2059

(Lease \$67/mo)* (Financing available)

| | |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| 266MHz \$2219 | C/W 32MB SDIMM |
| 300MHz \$2459 | 24x CD-ROM, 15" Monitor |
| 333MHz \$2849 | 56K Voice Fax Modem |
| | 4.3 GB U-ATA Hard Drive |

Upgrades:

| | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 64 MB SDIMM | 17" Monitor |
| 6.4 GB Hard Drive | 32x CD-ROM Drive |



ATI Xpert @ Play 4MB PCI/ AGP \$205/235 • ATI Xpert @ Work 4MB AGP \$220 • Rascal 28.8 External Fax Modem \$55
Syquest Sparq 1.0GB Parallel \$280 • Ensoniq PCI Sound Card \$60 • Mitsumi CD-Writer 2801TE Int. IDE (8x Read/ 2x Write) \$440
Diamond Viper 4MB SGRAM AGP \$230 • Western Digital 5.1GB Ultra Hard Drive \$315 • Motorola 56K External Fax Modem \$165



| CPU | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Intel Pentium®166/200/233MHz MMX | \$158/200/310 |
| Intel Pentium®II 233/266/300MHz | \$420/580/820 |
| Intel Pentium®II 333MHz | \$1220 |
| IBM or Cyrix 200/233 MX | \$130/210 |
| AMD K6-166/200/233 MX | \$170/210/250 |

MAINBOARDS

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Intel Pentium® II AL440LXNA/DK440LX (Dual) | \$243/737 |
| Asus Pentium II P2L97/ P2L97D (440LX) | \$233/393 |
| Asus TX97/TX97E /TXP4(430 TX) | \$195/195/160 |
| Acer Pentium® II AX6L(440LX) | \$240 |
| Acer AP5T 512K Burst (430TX) /ATX | \$150/160 |
| FIC Apollo PA 2007 1MB Burst | \$145 |
| FIC Apollo PA 2012 w/ AGP, 1MB Burst | \$190 |
| ABit Pentium II P6LX (440LX) | \$205 |

FLOPPY / HARD DRIVES

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|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| O.R. Tech. 120 MB Floppy Drive | \$155 |
| 120 MB Floppy Disk | \$23 |
| WD Ultra 2.1/3.2/4.3/5.1/6.4GB | \$220/260/300/315/390 |
| Quantum Ultra 2.1/3.2/4.3/6.4GB | \$205/250/295/375 |
| Fujitsu Ultra 2.1/ 2.6 GB | \$199/220 |
| Fujitsu Ultra 3.2/ 4.3/ 5.3/ 6.4 GB | \$235/275/330/370 |
| Maxtor Ultra 3.2/ 4.3/ 7.0/ 8.4 GB | \$255/299/ 445/ 499 |

TAPE / DAT / REMOVABLE DRIVES

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|--|-----------|
| Colorado T3000 3.2GB Int. | \$235 |
| Colorado TP5 Int./ Ext. | \$285/349 |
| Tape 3M TR-3 1.6GB/TR-4 4.0GB | \$43/49 |
| Iomega Ditto 2.0 GB Int./Ext. | \$165/233 |
| Iomega Ditto Max. 3.0 GB Int./Ext. | \$275/275 |
| Iomega Ditto Max. Pro 10 GB Int. SCSI | \$399 |
| Iomega Ditto Max. Pro 10 GB Ext. Para. | \$399 |
| Iomega 100MB ZIP IDE/ ZIP Plus Ext. | \$145/269 |
| Iomega ZIP Disk 100MB | \$18 |
| Iomega Jazz Drive 1GB SCSI Int./Ext | \$390/419 |
| Iomega Jazz Disk single/3-pcs pak | \$125/360 |
| Syquest SyJet 1.5 GB Int. IDE or SCSI/Parallel | \$399/399 |
| Syquest SyJet Disk | \$99 |
| Syquest Sparq 1.0 GB Parallel/ Int. IDE | \$280/280 |
| Sparq Disk | \$59 |

| MEMORY | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| 30pin 1MB/4MB | \$13/19 |
| 4MB 72pin 60ns/EDO (1MBX32) | \$18/18 |
| 8MB 72pin 60ns/EDO (2MBX32) | \$27/25 |
| 16MB 72pin 60ns/EDO (4MBX32) | \$48/45 |
| 32MB 72pin 60ns/EDO (8MBX32) | \$93/88 |
| 64MB 72pin 60ns/EDO (16MBX32) | call/call |
| SDIMM 16/ 32/ 64/ 128MB | \$48/90/199/call |
| SDIMM w. EP ROM 32/ 64/ 128MB | \$90/235/486 |

SCSI CONTROLLERS

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| Adaptec 2940UW Single/Kit | \$319/370 |
| Asus ASSC200 controller | \$100 |

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| | |
|--|-------------|
| 24X Toshiba/Panasonic | \$99/95 |
| 32X Acer/ Toshiba | \$120/125 |
| SCSI Toshiba 12x/ 32x | \$145/175 |
| Creative Encore DVD Kit | \$485 |
| Sound Blaster 16PnP | \$52 |
| Sound Blaster AWE 64 PnP | \$102 |
| Ensoniq PCI Sound Card | \$60 |
| Altec Lansing subwoofer sys. ACS 45/48 | \$147/188 |
| Yamaha M7/M15/M20 speakers | \$65/85/105 |
| Yamaha SW10H subwoofer | \$135 |

CD WRITERS

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Mitsumi CD Writer 2801 TE Int. IDE | \$440 |
| Yamaha CRW 4001 Int. IDE | \$620 |
| Yamaha CRW 4260 SCSI Int./ Ext. | \$655/771 |

SCANNERS/PRINTERS/CAMERAS

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Acer 310P/ 310S/610S | \$149/173/239 |
| Microtek Scanner E3+/ V310 | \$199/199 |
| Microtek E6 Pro (c/w Full Photo Shop) | \$720 |
| UMAX Astra 610P/ 610S Scanner | \$180/199 |
| UMAX 1200S/ 1210P Scanner | \$590/259 |
| HP 5S/5P Scanner | \$267/339 |
| HP 5100C/ 6100C Scanner | \$389/989 |
| Canon 250/4300/4550 BubbleJet | \$190/254/429 |
| Epson Stylus #400/600/800 | \$255/340/460 |
| Epson Stylus II ProXL | \$1950 |
| HP 692/722C/890C/1000C | \$299/448/572/635 |
| HP 6L/6P/6MP Laser | \$513/965/1225 |
| HP 5/5N/4000/4000N Laser | \$1414/1799/1499/1939 |
| Lexmark 2030/2050/7000/7200 | \$240/275/425/480 |
| Kodak DC-25 Digi Camera | \$369 |

VIDEO CARDS

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Repetitive strain do's and don'ts

info box

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BY S.J. ROSS

Tendinitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, aching shoulders, strained backs, and even sore thumbs. We know the repetitive strain injuries (RSI) computer use can cause, but how do we avoid them?

For anyone who spends three, four, or even more hours a day on the computer, the following list of the five worst things you can do on your computer will help you determine if you are on a direct path to RSI disaster. Immediately following is a list of the top ten

tips that can help you reduce or even sidestep potentially disastrous RSIs.

So snuggle into your ergonomic chair and take an ergonomic break from your computer to read these ergonomic lists compiled with the assistance of Kathy Kawaja, an ergonomics consultant with Human Factors North Inc.

The five fastest ways to get RSI

1. Rest your wrist while keyboarding or mousing. "When you do this, the muscles doing all the work are in the forearm," says Kawaja. "They are small and not designed for this work and they quickly fatigue, which means you may get, for example, elbow tendinitis." Instead, Kawaja suggests you float your hands over the keyboard and only rest when not typing.

2. Look at the monitor for more than an hour without taking a break. "This can lead to eye strain and headaches," says Kawaja. "Take microbreaks and blink or gently cup your eyes to create a dark environment for 15 to 20 seconds or look at an object more than 20 feet away to change the demand on your eye muscles."

3. Work at the wrong height. "Your key-

board and mouse height should be just below your seated elbow height," says Kawaja. "If your working height is above or below that you are putting incredible strain on the muscles between your shoulder blades."

4. Overreach to use your mouse. "If your forearm is unsupported when you reach for your mouse, your neck and shoulder does most of the work, leaving you susceptible to injuries such as shooting pains that travel down the arm and burning, aching muscular pain," says Kawaja. "The mouse should be at same height as your keyboard and right beside your keyboard. And, your forearm should be supported on your arm rest when you are mousing, but not when you are keyboarding."

5. Work through the day without taking scheduled breaks and microbreaks. "There is a direct correlation between not taking breaks and injury," says Kawaja. "Most of the people I see don't take breaks and these are the people who have problems."

The ten best tips for reducing risk of computer-related injury

1. Remind yourself that you are a computer

athlete. "People forget that they are carrying out a job that is very strenuous," says Kawaja. "You need to be fit, so stretch and get some exercise, even just walking, regularly."

2. Take scheduled breaks, such as lunch, mid-morning, and mid-afternoon coffee breaks, and take 30- to 60-second microbreaks every half hour. "Standing up to answer the phone, changing the back rest angle of your chair to lean back, or doing stretching exercises are excellent microbreaks," says Kawaja. "A good exercise is standing with your feet shoulder width apart, both hands on your lower back, and gently stretching backward. Another good one is doing standing pushups in the corner of a room, one hand on either wall."

3. Don't shrug off persistent discomfort such as tingling and numbness in the hands, burning or aching in the neck or upper back, and any shooting or stabbing pains. "The three stages of RSI are: one, experiencing intermittent symptoms when carrying out computer work; two, experiencing persistent

continued on page 45

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Apple's fall—in excruciating detail

BY DAVID ROSEN

Suggesting that Apple has faced tough times is like saying the R.M.S. Titanic encountered a bit of ice. Everyone knows it happened, but they don't know why or how. Well, after reading Jim Carlton's new book entitled *Apple: The Inside Story of Intrigue, Egomania and Business Blunders* you'll know the story—in excruciating detail.

Carlton's book starts at a key turning point in the company's history: the June 13, 1993 firing of then-Apple chief executive officer John Sculley. What follows is a painstakingly detailed account of the errors in judgment, unbridled arrogance, and sheer bad luck sur-

info box

Apple: The Inside Story of Intrigue, Egomania and Business Blunders, by Jim Carlton, from Times Business, distributed by Random House. 0-8129-2851-2. \$38.50.

rounding Apple's race for the bottom.

It's a tough read, but Carlton does a great job of distributing the blame, pointing out that it wasn't one individual or group that

brought Apple to its knees. The company's board of directors were paralyzed by increased competition; meanwhile, cadres of squabbling engineers ran up millions of dollars in project overruns. Perhaps surprisingly, Carlton finds few faults with John Sculley, suggesting his error was hiring the wrong people for the job.

Carlton reserves a special place in Hell for Jean-Louis Gasse, however, a fast-talking Parisian who once headed Apple's elite engineering group. According to Carlton, Gasse's infamous contributions included championing the not-ready-for-prime-time Newton, helping to raise prices during an industry-wide price war, and his campaign

against licensing.

Carlton presents evidence that Microsoft's Bill Gates (then only a multi-millionaire) outlined a licensing strategy that would have guaranteed the Mac OS—and not Windows—would be the dominant computer environment. Instead, Apple's arrogance and fear led to scrapping the deal, and eventually, paving the way to Microsoft's market domination.

Will readers discover why Apple's management team squandered one of the most valuable technological franchises in history? Perhaps not, but after reading all 442 pages of Carlton's *Apple*, they'll certainly understand "how." ♦

Informative Internet title already dated

BY LYNN GREINER

Trying to stuff the entire Internet into a nutshell is a pretty tight squeeze, but author Valerie Quercia takes a shot at it in *Internet in a Nutshell*, a new Nutshell guide from O'Reilly & Associates. In about 450 pages, she covers topics ranging from browsing to Web-page authoring.

But the trouble with books about the Internet is that they quickly become out of date, often before they are even shipped. Some parts of *Internet in a Nutshell* suffer from this malady; they're not inaccurate, they're just yesterday's news. In Quercia's case, she covers the two most common browsers and their peripheral functions, such as mail and news, in great detail. I learned a

lot about the idiosyncrasies of both Netscape Navigator and Microsoft Internet Explorer (IE), although the Netscape program discussed (version 4.0) was obsolete.

The other chapters of the book more than compensate, though. The chapter on ftp contains a wonderful command reference for this cryptic piece of software, as well as detailed

continued on page 43

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Internet in a Nutshell by Valerie Quercia, from O'Reilly & Assoc. ISBN: 1-56592-323-5. \$28.95.

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Words of working wisdom

COMPILED BY RENÉE WILSON

Some good advice from our writers who earn a living working from home:

Get a second email account

Get a second email account for business and only whisper it to PR folk and clients. This is so that the email your moronic computer geek pals send you don't get mixed in with the paying work. Be strict about this.

—Marc Dacey

Get a second phone line

The most important and difficult problem for anyone trying to work in one is avoiding distractions. It may sound simplistic, but you'd be surprised at how many people allow distractions to remain in their work environment. Get a separate telephone line for business, make it clear that you will not accept personal calls there, and stick to your resolve. Don't answer the door (unless you expect a client or delivery) or your home telephone during business hours. Turn down the home telephone bell so you won't even know when calls come in, checking your messages only once during the work day.

—Caryn Mladen

Get used to "the office"

Know that you will always be in "the office"—no matter the time, day, or circumstance.

—Chris Guly

Backup, backup, backup!

There are two kinds of computer users: those who've lost data due to hardware failure, and those who's turn has not yet come. Don't gloat if you're in the second category—rest assured, your turn will come. A regular backup strategy is your insurance against not only hardware failure, but also virus attacks, and even theft and fire. Do it now and then do it often!

—Alan Zisman

Prioritize

Constantly reassess your priorities and ask yourself what is the best use of your time. Focus first on immediate project deadlines, second on long-term business goals (from marketing to training), and third on long-term management issues (from contingency planning to business positioning).

—S.J. Ross

Shred not!

Among the many challenges awaiting the SOHO operator, there is nothing more pressing (or depressing) than losing the paper trail. No matter how sophisticated you get technology-wise, there is no escape from keeping hard copies of everything—receipts, letters, memos, invoices, the works. So, a good filing system is a must and it must be coupled with an equally adequate waste disposal mechanism. And under no circumstances should that include a shredder.

—Paul Angyal

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delivering your expertise and your skills. Outsource what you don't do well. It may put a strain on your budget at first, but if you cost out

your time at the rates you deserve, you'll find that it's crafting widgets that makes money. Pay someone else to do your books and tax returns,

or to design the Web site where you'll sell the widgets. Don't waste your time and talents.

—Alan Thwaites



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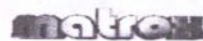
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Investing for the new millennium

Technology trends to watch

BY THOMAS KLEIN

Mergers and acquisitions

The continuing trend of consolidation in the technology sector is showing no signs of slowing down. Mergers and acquisitions will continue in the technology sector for 1998. I think this will be a year of mega deals as well as many smaller acquisitions. For example, Compaq recently offered more than \$10 billion of stock and cash to acquire Digital Equipment. Netscape is rumored to be up for sale. Gateway 2000 has been mentioned as a takeover candidate. Small Internet companies are falling like flies. And this is just some of the mergers and acquisitions news of the past few weeks!

How do investors take advantage? The trend seems to benefit the larger companies over the long run. Therefore less risk tolerant investors should look at the big blue chip names and hold on for the long term. For the aggressive investor look for the smaller companies with a competitive advantage or out-of-favor companies with some intrinsic value that are trading at close to book value.

Growth of enterprise resource planning

What the heck is enterprise resource planning? (That's ERP for short!) Well, maybe you recognize the names SAP, Peoplesoft, Baan and Oracle. These companies create packaged software for corporations that integrate departments and systems so that information can be shared in real time with employees, suppliers and distributors. They quarterback with a company's in-house technology departments and integrate scalable software solutions that increase the quality of information and the speed with which it can be shared. These top four ERP companies account for more than \$3 billion in revenues, and the industry is expected to grow at 35 percent for 1998.

Many analysts are predicting that the Year 2000 problem (also known as Y2K) may spur additional growth and revenues as companies look for solutions. As well in Europe there is the added problem of companies software complying with the rules of the upcoming European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). While ERP companies have had a good run in the stock market last year the momentum for the future continues to look bright.

Internet still growing and growing

The Internet keeps growing and growing and growing! So how do investors capitalize on this trend. When looking to invest, I don't want to speculate on the distant future (two or more years ahead)—it leaves too much room for error. I don't want to assume the risk of predicting if some concept or application will succeed. Investors should look at what is happening right now and where it should be over the next year to 18 months. I think the short-term problem of the Internet is how to increase speed, and that means bandwidth. The problem is that everyone has known this for the last couple of years and everyone wants a piece of the pie.

So, while the infrastructure of the Net has been the best place to invest in the past, the future is getting more complicated. Microsoft's \$1-billion investment in Comcast to support the cable broadband solutions will increase competition in an arena that has been getting more crowded over the past year. Plus there is always the threat of new technologies in the form of wireless and satellite. Therefore investors should choose wisely when investing in the Internet sector even from the perceived less risky infrastructure standpoint. The larger companies look like the winners in this sector because they have access to the capital and the deep pockets needed to ride out pricing competition. The problem I see is a bigger pie with lower

margins, which suggests lower earnings, leading to lower share prices.

Dominance of Microsoft

Everyone loves to hate Microsoft but it continues to maneuver around obstacles and make successful decisions. Last year it took on all challengers and hardly broke a sweat. In 1997, it dealt a crippling blow to Netscape's growth. Oracle's network computer doesn't look like a serious threat. Even the U.S. government couldn't derail Microsoft in a meaningful manner. Plus, I think Bill Gates realizes he has to improve his public relations with both the government and the public—which should dispel some of the detractors.

The question for an investor should not be popularity but can a company grow? Growth is critical to the upward momentum of Microsoft's share price and growth in the technology market has not reached a point of saturation. Many analysts are concerned that the growth in the U.S. is slowing and that Asia, the future star of growth, has been derailed. Yes this may be true in the short term, but to balance these negatives Europe and Japan are poised for recovery. Both Europe and Japan have seriously lagged behind North America in technology and will have to spend more efforts over the next few years to catch up. The continuation of global growth will bolster Microsoft but will also create many other strong complementary niche players.

Expansion of niche players

Niche players are companies that carve out a piece of the technology sector and try to add value to that area. Corporations have become highly computerized and this creates demand for more specialty applications. The general infrastructure of technology has been laid out and future explosive growth will be provided by companies that specialize in filling corpo-

rate needs. This is an area that only investors with a higher degree of risk tolerance should explore.

What I am looking for is a company with an ability for innovation. I'm not looking for a Microsoft giant killer but companies that coordinate or partner with existing technologies and create a competitive corporate advantage.

An example of an immediate corporate need is the storage of existing data and the retrieval of that data. Businesses are looking for ways to access critical data more quickly and cheaply than their competition. Improvements are also needed in document copying, printing and photography. Copying and photography are merging with printing and the companies that can make the transition easier could benefit. Another short term need is remote access, as employees depend on systems in the office, the need to interact outside the office becomes more critical.

For dreamers who want a niche to bet on the distant future my guess is look for speech recognition technology to reduce the dependence on the keyboard. ♦

Thomas Klein is an investment executive with ScotiaMcLeod and can be reached at tom_klein@scotia-mcleod.com

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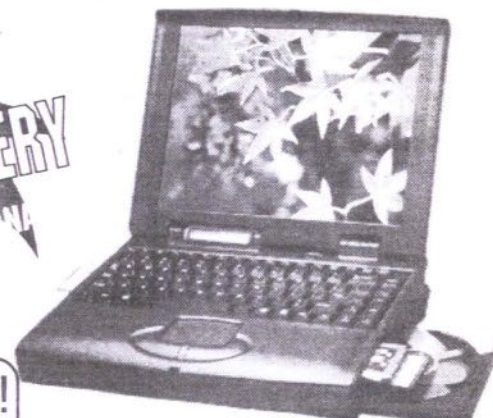
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Guerrillas target small business

info box

Guerrilla Marketing with Technology: Unleashing the Full Potential of Your Small Business, by Jay Conrad Levinson, from Addison-Wesley Longman Inc. \$20.95.

BY S.J. ROSS

Despite all the hype to the contrary, the computer is simply a tool. Used poorly, this tool can swamp you with frustrating and costly problems—but when used efficiently, it can enhance your work flow, increase your productivity, improve your cost-effectiveness, and boost your profitability.

Tips and techniques for the efficient use of this valuable tool abound in *Guerrilla Marketing with Technology: Unleashing the Full Potential of Your Small Business*, by Jay Levinson, prolific author of such books as *Guerrilla Marketing*, *Guerrilla Marketing Attack*, and *Guerrilla Marketing Excellence*.

Levinson offers a variety of helpful suggestions designed to teach SOHOs (small office/home office) how to maximize limited technological resources and compete with the big companies. The book covers an extensive variety of topics: creating a web site; using the Internet to access market data and anticipate industry trends; building an information network; enhancing stakeholder and customer relationships with real-time communications; and using databases to track existing customers and attract new business. Readers will also learn about managing finances with

financial-management tools; maximizing time by automating routine administrative activities; managing growth by monitoring systems and processes; using tracking software to manage inventory and increase stock turnaround; and using DTP (desktop publishing software) to design and distribute promotional materials, such as brochures and newsletters.

Evinson's reader-friendly manual provides several interesting case studies, a glossary of terms, an abundance of handy tips and even a What's Your Tech-ficiency Quotient? quiz. Six step-by-step start-up guides (ranging from How to Create and Deliver a Newsletter to How to Conduct Business Research on the Internet) make *Guerrilla Marketing with Technology* a handy introduction to maximizing the potential of your virtual office, though not an in-depth study on computer use. ♦



Internet in a Nutshell

continued from page 40

instructions on how to use your browser's ftp, as well as Windows and Mac-based standalone ftp programs.

Chapters on finding people and information on the Internet include brief descriptions of popular search engines, complete with examples of their search commands, and a section telling you how to use Telnet to access library catalogues and other resources.

There are charts of file extensions explaining what kind of data each file type contains, and tables of commands for the news readers in IE and Netscape. There are also sources and descriptions of helper apps and file compression/decompression and translation utilities. Internet Relay Chat is explored in a brief chapter, and there are 60 pages dedicated to building your own Web page, including a detailed list of HTML tags.

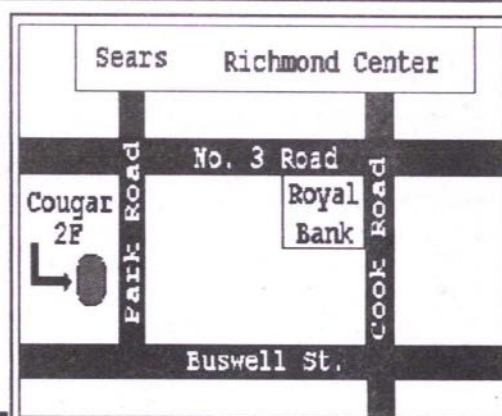
There's some discussion of Netiquette, but the whole issue of security is glossed over. This may be fine for experienced and aware users, but novices may get the idea that the Internet is safer than it really is. On the whole, though, *Internet in a Nutshell* is an excellent reference that explains the Net in simple and explicit language. ♦

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The balance sheet:

CP! looks at the pros and cons of tax software

BY GEORGE PETRICKO

It's that time of year again, and in effort to appeal to the bean counter in all of us, we've broken down our reviews of the latest tax software into a kind of profit and loss statement, summarizing the strengths and weaknesses of each program.

Many happy returns!

CanTax Deluxe

Web site: <http://www.cantax.com>

Strengths:

- For the first time CanTax has released both 16- and 32-bit versions of this program. Both the multimedia CD-ROM and a diskette version without multimedia are available in both versions.
- New seniors' work sheets, Seniors Benefit Planner and Senior Benefit Analysis, have been added to help the user to determine the impact of the proposed new Seniors' Benefit.
- A new series of tabs along the bottom of the screen makes navigating from page to page of a multi-page form, or from form to form, faster and easier.
- Added to its print option is an Index of Print Schedules, which is usually found only in professional tax programs. It indicates to the user which forms and schedules have been selected for printing.
- Phone, fax-back, or email technical support is available to registered users.

Weaknesses:

- Only 15 returns can be prepared. However, for users renewing directly through CanTax, upgrades can be purchased (at a fairly steep price).
- You can't customize the size of the icons. Many users who have been accustomed to using this feature will regret its disappearance.
- This is the final year for the DOS version of the T1 Personal.

CoolTax

Web site: <http://www.cooltax.com>

Strengths:

- The data entry screens are clear, well laid out, and easy to follow.
- It's free! This program can be downloaded from FLS Research's CoolTax Web site and used to prepare up to 15 returns.
- Utilizing its Family Wizard, CoolTax can accommodate up to ten family members for optimum distribution of deductions and medical/dental/charitable/etc. receipts.
- CoolTax can accommodate a taxpayer with just one T4 and the usual deductions and credits, right up to the more complex return for the taxpayer with business or professional and/or real-estate income.
- CoolTax's Data Monitor feature at the bottom of the screen provides the user with running totals: Net Income, Taxable Income, Provincial Tax, Total Tax Payable, and Balance Due (refund) as figures are entered.

Weaknesses:

- This is a stripped-down version of FLS Research's professional TaxByte program with e-file, with the professional features disabled, although the icons for these disabled features are still displayed on the screen. The program would be much improved, and at the least certainly less confusing for the user, if the interface were modified to eliminate these dud icons.

GriffTax for Mac

Web site: <http://www.grifftax.com>

Strengths:

- GriffTax provides for e-filing through any registered Revenue Canada Agent who uses GriffTax Professional.
- Only two companies produce tax software for Macintosh computers: GriffTax and QuickTax.
- Provides the option of printing the return in the sequence prescribed by Revenue Canada, or in the program-generated sequence. The user also has the choice of printing all or selected pages.
- GriffTax automatically backs up the user's data file.
- GriffTax is equipped with a unique dual-language (English/French) feature, which allows the user to work in one language and print in the other. This feature is peculiar to GriffTax: no other tax program has this capability.

Weaknesses:

- Unavailable for Windows.
- The program can produce only 25 returns. Upon payment to GriffTax of \$20, the user can produce a further 25 returns.

HomeTax Deluxe

Web site: <http://www.hometax.com>

Strengths:

- This year marks the release of both 16-bit (Windows 3.1) and 32-bit (Windows 95 and NT) versions of this package.
- To facilitate the entry of figures, HomeTax now provides replications of Revenue Canada T-Slips.
- The Your RRSPs in Action feature for use in planning the user's current RRSP contribution and future retirement income is new to HomeTax this year.
- The 32-bit Auditor, newly redesigned, highlights problem areas with a red "X" placed on the trouble spots.
- Unlimited technical support for registered users is available by telephone, Web site, email, and faxback.

Weaknesses:

- Any Windows 3.1 (16-bit) user who enjoyed the multimedia deluxe version in previous years will be disappointed that it is unavailable this year.
- HomeTax only allows for the preparation of 16 returns.

Icicle Tax

Web site: <http://www.netcon.ca/~icicle>

Strengths:

- This is an excellent and inexpensive add-on for the experienced spreadsheet user, knowledgeable in the preparation tax returns.
- It is available for Microsoft Excel for Mac Version 3 or higher, Claris Works Version 2 or higher and Excel for Windows Version 5 or higher.
- Icicle Tax comes with the basic T1 General, Schedules 1 to 11, Provincial Tax and credit forms for all provinces except Quebec, T778 Child Care Expenses, T776 Rental Income, T2032 Professional Income, and T2124 Business Income.
- It is well laid out, with clear and concise on-screen instructions.
- It is capable of producing a high-quality income tax return. The formatting, graphics and printing capabilities are comparable to those produced by the sophisticated, better-known tax packages.

Weaknesses:

- Very little instruction is given in the preparation of the tax returns.
- Icicle Tax does not come equipped with a diagnostics routine to check for possible omissions.

Quick Returns for DOS, Personal Version

Web site: <http://www.aracnet.com/~qrs>

Strengths:

- Quick Returns requires only 640KB of memory, making it an ideal program for users with, say, a 386 processor.
- A maximum of 32 tax returns can be prepared, roughly twice the number allowed by its competitors.
- Quick Returns provides for the processing of financial statements for real estate, business and professional income, farming and fishing activities, and Reconciliation-Dec. 31 Year-End. Forms for capital gains reporting and many miscellaneous forms and work sheets are included.
- Quick Returns has special Spouse Linkages permitting the user to import his or her spouse's net income into the appropriate box on the return and ensures that the same tax credits are not claimed by both spouses. Should this situation arise, the user is alerted.
- The print manager feature permits the user to print only the pages of the tax return required.

Weaknesses:

- Not available for Windows.

QuickTax Deluxe

Web site: <http://www.intuit.com/canada/quicktax>

Strengths:

- QuickTax includes a description of procedures for e-filing.
- Fully compatible with Windows 3.1/95.



With QuickTax Deluxe, as many as 18 returns can be prepared.

- The T-Slip and receipt information data entry screens have been redesigned for easier entry of data.
- The new Retirement Planner lets users enter the amount of their current RRSP, their proposed future contributions, the estimated return rates, and their age at the date of the last contribution. The Retirement Planner will then calculate the value of the RRSP at the date of retirement.
- QuickTax has introduced a revolutionary new feature that makes it the first tax program in Canada to allow the user to launch a Web browser directly from the program's RRSP Analyzer. The Web browser is set up to place the user at Canada's premier financial Web site, where they can partake of a veritable smorgasbord of RRSP information and advice.

Weaknesses:

- The Reminder Calendar does not highlight the current date.
- A complicated CompuServe email address is provided: (73537.2355@compuserve.com). Something simpler would be better.

SonicTax

Web site: <http://www.taxbuster.com>

Strengths:

- Can be downloaded from SonicTax's Web site.
- SonicTax provides for the processing of an unlimited number of income tax returns.
- The RRSP Limits Calculator is simple to use and very easy to understand.
- The Stock Market Trade planner is for the savvy market investor who wishes to track their investment portfolio, with a view to determining the effect on their tax status of any capital gains or losses.
- On certain lines of the return, SonicTax provides a Claim On/Off switch. By clicking this switch, the user can elect to take that particular credit. This feature ensures no errors are made by the user in entering claim amounts.

Weaknesses:

- No user's manual is available.
- SonicTax does not have an interview feature that leads the user through the tax return.

Repetitive strain ...

continued from page 38

symptoms when working and not working; and three, experiencing symptoms that get in the way of the activities of daily living, such as opening doors and using a steering wheel," says Kawaja. "The minute you experience symptoms, you should seek help from your doctor."

4. If you are experiencing ongoing discomfort, have an ergonomic assessment performed on your workstation. Ergonomics consultants charge \$300 to \$500 for a SOHO (single office/home office) assessment.

5. Know your chair. "Know how to adjust the features on your chair and use these adjustability features," says Kawaja. "For example, periodically increase the backrest angle of your chair about five degrees so you can lean back slightly and take a microbreak."

6. Manage your stress levels. "Psychosocial factors, such as deadlines, can influence our level of stress," says Kawaja. "Mental stress equals physical stress, which equals an increased risk of injury. If you are feeling stressed, exercise, take deep breaths, or listen to relaxation tapes."

7. Be nice to mice. "Don't grip the mouse any harder than you have to because the harder you grip the mouse, the more muscle activity occurs and the quicker the onset of muscle fatigue," says Kawaja. "Get a mouse that fits your hand size and pretend it is a fine piece of china." Kawaja recommends that men consider the Microsoft mouse, while women, because of their typically smaller hands, consider the Logitech MouseMan. She also notes that "thumb trackballs are a nightmare" because of the strain on one digit and recommends that trackball users select a mousing device with a trackball large enough

to require the use of multiple fingers.

8. Don't be a banger or a clacker. "Listen to yourself typing," says Kawaja. "We tend to hit the keyboard four times harder than we have to and the more force we use, the quicker the onset of fatigue. Try to apply less force when typing." Kawaja recommends split

keyboards, such as the Microsoft Natural Keyboard (\$99.95 suggested list) for touch typists "because it allows wrists to come in at the right angle."

9. Position your monitor correctly. "The monitor should be arms-length away, with the top of the screen, not the top of the frame,

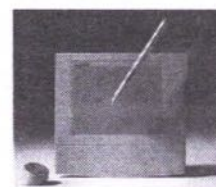
at eye level," says Kawaja. "And don't tilt the monitor up, because you will pick up the glare of overhead lights."

10. Have a qualified ergonomist assess your work station. To find a qualified ergonomist, Kawaja suggests you contact the Human Factors Association of Canada. ♦

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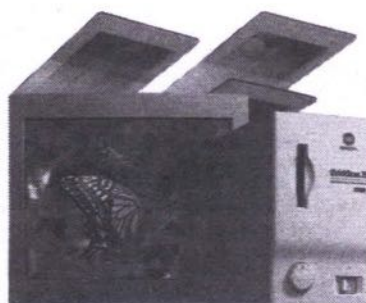
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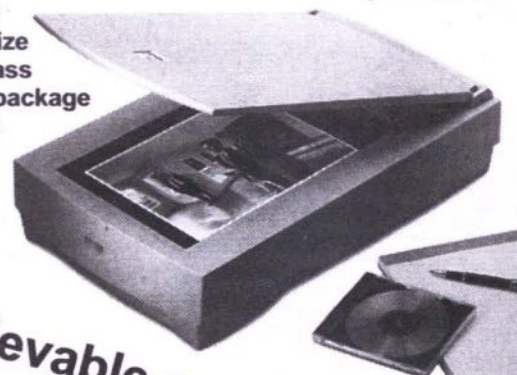


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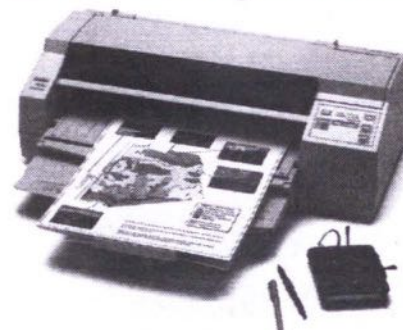
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The balance sheet

continued from page 44

COMPUTER PLAYER!
COMPUTER PLAYER!
COMPUTER PLAYER!
COMPUTER PLAYER!
EDITOR'S CHOICE

Editor's choice

George's top pick is QuickTax. Here's why:

- QuickTax's RRSP Analyzer has a Web browser that takes the user directly to all of

the information on RRSPs that he or she will ever require on the Internet.

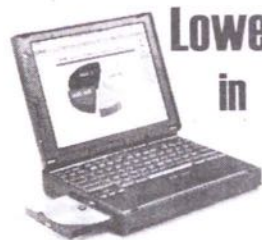
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George Petricko is a computer consultant and licensed e-file preparer. You can contact him at grp@planeteeer.com.

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Games

LEGO Island plays well

BY MARC SALTZMAN

Over the past five to ten years, most of the classic board, tile, and card games from our childhood have gone through a conversion into computer format in some shape or form. Popular toys, such as Mr. Potato Head, jigsaw puzzles, and Barbie, have also made the transformation to the small screen.

But why? Are these games so abundant because our inner child is still calling, and we instinctively clutch at our last thread of adolescence? Is it the desire to pass on a piece of our own personal nostalgia to our kids? Or, perhaps it's just another case of multinational corporations looking to make a new buck with an old—but proven—franchise. Chances are it's a bit of all three.

Unfortunately, with a few notable exceptions, such as Monopoly, Hoyle's Classic Card Games, and Chessmaster 5500, the overall results have been less than stellar.

These thoughts traipsed through my mind as I witnessed the production at last year's Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) conference in Atlanta for Mindscape's new LEGO



Island. This 3D action-adventure game for kids had arguably the largest display out of the bunch, complete with giant TV monitors with computer-animated presentations and a staff of over a dozen people dressed as characters in the game, spending three entire days furiously building life-size objects made out of LEGO blocks.

Don't look back?

So, I waited until the game was released before I passed judgment to see if it was yet another bastardization of one of my

favourite toys as a kid. I'm pleased to say LEGO Island is an excellent digital "port" to the PC. Here's why:

Based on the LEGO Town Play Theme, the 6- to 12 year-old player explores and customizes the island from a first-person view, as they assume the identities of various LEGO characters: Pepper the skateboarding pizza delivery dude; the extroverted Laura Brick; police constable Nick Brick; pizzeria owner Mama Brickolini; Papa Brickolini; and so forth. The entire game is hosted by a jolly narrator, The Infomaniac, who founded and built LEGO island a "zillion" years ago. Each of the characters has very unique personality and kids will surely grow to love the differences in look, dialogue, music, and talents of all the inhabitants. Speaking of music, there is more than 90 minutes of a fun, original score to listen to while playing.

After building and racing your custom vehicles out of LEGO pieces, such as helicopters, cars, water jets, and skateboards, you accidentally release the Brickster (the town bad guy) from jail. The climax of the game is chasing and capturing him before he destroys the entire island brick by brick. Personally, I



info box

LEGO Island
from Mindscape, \$39.99 to \$44.99
System requirements: Windows 95;
Pentium PC (120 MHz or higher); 4x CD-
ROM drive; 16 MB RAM; SVGA 640x480,
256 colors (graphic accelerator support-
ed); Windows-compatible mouse and
sound card.

had just as much fun exploring this bright, colourful world, even if it didn't help with the overall objective!



The entire game is navigated with a mouse, while the four arrow buttons on a keyboard aid in steering the vehicles. All characters and objects are rendered in true 3D, so the player can view the world from unlimited points of view. There are over three hours of animation, and LEGO Island also features Direct3D, so all graphic accelerator cards, regardless of the chip set, should be able to support the graphical and speed enhancements.

Star Search, here we come

The animation and lip syncing are really something to marvel at (Mindscape developed a proprietary technology that combines dialogue and voice files on the computer, using a 100,000-plus word vocabulary and a myriad of facial expressions to match the vowels and consonants). Some of the celebrity voices employed for this product include June Forray (the voice of Rocky and Natasha from *Rocky & Bullwinkle* cartoons), David Lander (Squiggy from *Laverne & Shirley*), and 13-year-old John Morris (Andy in *Toy Story*).

For the ingenuity of the game, plus the relatively low price and high replayability factor, LEGO Island is a great addition to any kid's CD-ROM library. Other companies looking to revive classic games and toys should look to LEGO Island as inspiration.

After all, the word LEGO comes from a Danish word, "Leg-godt", meaning play well. And LEGO Island certainly does. ♦

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Impressive 3D gaming for less

BY MARC SALTZMAN

When you're talking computer-game software and hardware, it seems like it's getting harder and harder to keep up with the Joneses. What's hot today is passé tomorrow, so gamers are forced to dig deep into their pockets to be part of the craze or sit back and watch others rejoice at new technology. Where do you fit in?

If you are one of the cautious people and tend to wait until prices drop, or if you're still paying for holiday gifts on your credit card and can't afford a considerable entertainment purchase, now is your chance to get involved in 3D graphics acceleration, the hottest trend to hit the PC gaming industry since the Internet.

The 3D card revolution is here and all the latest and greatest games require one—or at least strongly suggest you use one for maximum performance and appearance. Games can now be accelerated in speed, with frame rates to die for, and supported games have

gorgeous visuals with smooth textures, fog, coloured lighting, transparencies, and other neat effects, leaving blocky, pixelated games behind in the dust.

Spare the pig, and spoil yourself

Although 3Dfx Interactive's chip sets seem to be in the forefront right now, with its extremely popular Voodoo Graphics and Voodoo 2 boards (due to appear sometime in late March), Canada's own Matrox Graphics Inc., out of Montreal, has come up with an affordable solution so gamers can jump on the 3D bandwagon without needing to break open the piggy bank.

The Matrox m3D is a 3D-only video card that supplements your existing PCI or AGP 2D video card (with a minimum of 2 MB memory). No special patches or cables are necessary: simply install the board into an available bus slot at the back of your PC and install the software.

If a game is written to support Microsoft's Direct3D, NEC's PowerVR, or OpenGL chip sets, the graphics will be passed on over to the m3D for peak performance. The m3D ships with 4 MB of SDRAM, capable of cranking games up to 30 frames per second or higher (at 640x480 resolu-

tion), with maximum settings up to 1,024x768. I test drove Tomb Raider II, Moto Racer, Hexen II, and Quake II, and was very impressed with the way the games looked and played.

The m3D also has one of the most impressive game bundles of the boards on the market today: the full game of Ultim@te Race, a special nine-level OEM version of Hexen II (Continent of the BlackMarsh), and 20 other

game demos.

The clincher? The Matrox m3D retails for only \$149 Canadian, or US\$99, which is about half the price of some of the high-end Voodoo Graphics, Rendition, or RIVA 128 boards—or about the cost of two or three computer games.

Kudos to Matrox for recognizing not all computer gamers have a huge budget for interactive entertainment, but still want to keep up with the latest trends in this fast-paced and exciting industry. ♦

MATROX m3D



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我的電腦 是比別人慢

作者：林啓清 (JimLin)

一、前言

如果您有用過以前的PC/XT或是80286、80386等級別的電腦，您一定會很驚訝目前電腦的速度進步的如此神速？

在筆者很不容易買到了一個全高型的中古10MB(是10MB不是10GB哦)硬碟，在當時真是驕包的可以傲視群倫。在當時，我也沒有想到現在會去買3.5GB的硬碟...)

而2.1GB的硬碟才剛出來沒有多久，現在已經快買不到了，取而代之的是3.5GB或是4.3GB的硬碟，且6.xGB的硬碟也來勢洶洶？不管是CPU的改進或是硬碟容量的演變，最終目的就是掏光您口袋裡的錢？如何能在這種換機洪流中，依然保有自我，而不會隨波逐流，確實是需要有點智慧？有人在換了更快的CPU後，對著朋友猛抱怨，換了新CPU速度沒有變快，但口袋裡的錢卻少了許多？

廣告的本身就是一種催眠，它讓您覺得您需要去買廣告中的產品，而製作精美的廣告，這種催眠的效果越明顯，產品就賣得更好...:-)

二、電腦慢的原因

很多人在抱怨自己的電腦很慢，所以很想升級自己的電腦，朋友也都說應該去換什麼樣的CPU，有些還言之鑿鑿表示換了一定會變快很多？要想知道電腦慢的原因，然後針對這個原因來解決，而不是人云亦云，瞎整一通！

其實，筆者坦白告訴您，您電腦會慢的原因，那是因為您用了Windows 95，如果您把它換成Windows 3.1的版本，您一點都不會覺得電腦慢？如果您連Windows都不用，只用以前的DOS，您更會覺得您目前這部電腦幾乎直追超級電腦的等級...:-)所以，問題的癥結點是您用了慢如烏龜的微軟 昏倒 系列軟體，而且微軟還規定您 每年都要昏倒一次，所以從95年開始推出 昏倒 95、昏倒 97 (沒有正式發行)。據說，98年的昏倒操作系統即將推出，大家應該及早準備好避量的東西？

一定會有讀者對筆者的說法嗤之以鼻，認為筆者在說廢話？因為演變到目前，差不多每個人都已經習慣使用微軟的昏倒軟體，還說只要好用

，一年才昏一次没啥大不了？所以，為了讓昏倒的效果更好，每個人都竭盡全力去增添硬體設備，絕對不讓別人的昏倒效果比您的好...:Q

好了...言歸正傳...再不回來，一定有讀者會認為筆者不會是昏倒，把腦子給撞壞了？

假設我們一定要用Windows的操作系統，那就一定要有快的CPU及一定容量的硬碟，還必須準備為數不少的記憶體(RAM)。

那如果我由現在的Pentium MMX換成Pentium II，那系統是不是會快很多？誰說的？筆者從來沒有說過這種話，實在不知道各位看官從何處得來的消息？廣告嗎？除了CPU會影響速度外，有一個大家都忽略的地方，那就是硬碟？

如果給我選擇快CPU還是換快的硬碟，您猜我會選那個？我當然是選硬碟。因為CPU再快，它還是要等硬碟去存取資料，難道新型的CPU可以把整套Windows存在CPU或RAM裡面嗎？既然都是要去硬碟裡抓資料，那您為什麼一直在換主機板及CPU呢？同樣容量的硬碟，並不代表它的速度是一樣的，同樣牌子同樣容量的硬碟，也會有因機型不同，而有不同的速度(價錢當然不一樣)。

這就是為什麼您翻開本雜誌的廣告，有的東西會比較便宜的原因囉！同樣規格的電腦，絕對會因為裡面所用的零件不同，而有不同的表現效率。所以，當您正慶幸自己買到一部便宜電腦時，千萬不要跟別人的電腦去比速度，否則您的心情可能會跌落谷底哦！

送給各位一句話，聰明人所做的事，不一定是聰明的。各位看官，您聰明嗎？PS.有關硬碟與Windows的關係，請參考上一期的雜誌即可。

三、Pentium II的迷思

如果您仔細觀察Intel的晶片發展歷史，您會發現從8088到80486是有長足的進步，到了Pentium (Intel並沒有出80586的CPU)後就逐漸放緩。而換了MMX的CPU在圖形的處理上確實有所進步，但在實際的處理速度並沒有顯著的差別？而內行的人，應該知道Intel所出的Pentium Pro賣得很差，逼得Intel只好再推出Pentium II來區隔市場。所以，我們可以說Pentium II是介於MMX及Pro之間的產品。那用Pentium II是不是會比較快？這倒是很見人見智的...:-)但是提醒大家的是，Pentium II並不是像以前可以直接換主機板及CPU就行的？因為Pentium II只有ATX的機型，而沒有以前的AT的型號。除非您本來就是用ATX的Case，否則您如果要換Pentium II，建議您不用去想升級這件事，因為一點都不划算，乾脆直接買一部新的Pentium II主機。

有些讀者可能根本就搞不清楚自己的電腦是屬於AT還是ATX？很簡單，只要您是屬於ATX的機器，在您選擇

Windows上的關機功能之後，您電腦的電源也隨之自動關閉。如果是AT的電腦，還必須要手動去關掉電源開關，電腦才會真正關閉。

四、加快Windows的速度

如果在不換硬體的狀況下，有沒有辦法讓Windows的速度變得快點呢？筆者提供以下建議：

1) 做磁碟重組
這個程式在 附屬應用程式 裡面的 系統工具 裡面。建議至少一個星期執行一次。

2) 刪除多餘的字型
放太多用不到的字型在裡面，會佔用較多的系統資源。如果您要刪除，最好找一位較懂的人幫您(如果您不是很懂)。

3) 不要安裝螢幕保護程式(使用Windows內含的即可)
像AfterDark這類軟體，能不裝就盡量不裝？

4) 不要安裝Plus
早期在Windows 95中文版，因為不裝Plus就沒有撥號網路，所以只好安裝Plus。現在如果您是使用OSR2(B版)，本身就已經內含撥號網路，所以不再需要安裝Plus。

5) 降低螢幕的解析度及顏色數
如果您的螢幕顯示卡不是很高級的，當您解析度調得太高，會佔用較多的CPU資源(您的顯示卡如果夠好，那就無所謂)。

6) 儘量不要安裝 駐式的防毒程式
如果您安裝 駐式(就是會一直檢查您的檔案，有毒馬上跟您講的那種)的防毒程式，那會大大的降低電腦的效率。

如果怕中毒，可以每次有新的檔案或磁片，就用掃毒程式掃一次，那應該就不太會中毒了？

五、結語

上個月在台加文化協會所舉辦的演講，已經圓滿結束，很感謝許多熱心的讀者到場捧場，並提供許多寶貴的意見給筆者。在3月份的時候，可能會在台加文化協會再辦一場，不過筆者目前還不確定時間，如果讀者有興趣也可直接打電話到台加文化協會找Eddie Fang查詢。

如果您有任何批評指教，歡迎與筆者聯絡，以下是我的聯絡方式：
E-Mail: jimlin@rogers.wave.ca 有興趣的讀者，可以直接連到筆者的WebSite，URL是http://www.cads.com.tw

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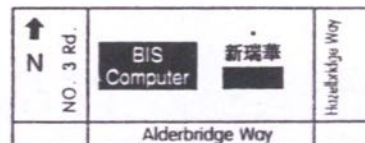
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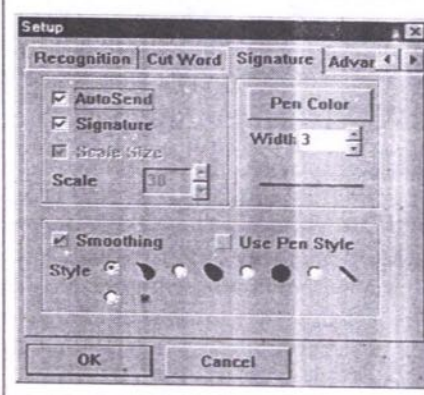
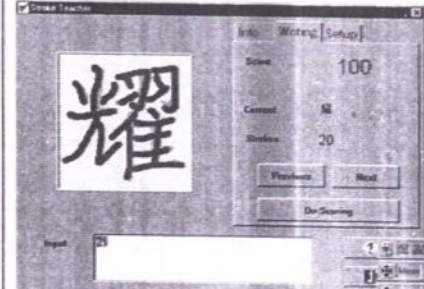
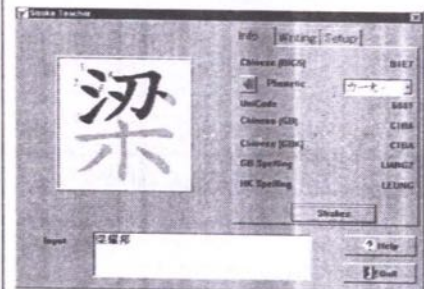
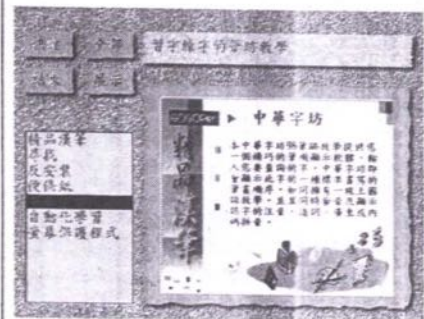
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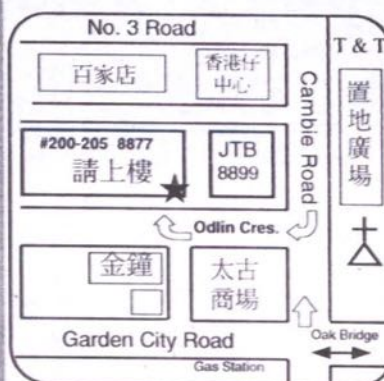


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Triple printer action!

How would you suggest that I connect three (3) different print devices to one (1) Wings PC? I have an HP855C, an HP laserjet 4L, and an Okioffice 44 Fax machine/printer/scanner, that I want to connect to a Gateway P266 running Windows 95.

Hcc709

Alan Zisman responds: Your typical PC will only have a single printer (parallel) port, two at the most; you can add a card to add an additional printer port or two—PCs can have up to 3 parallel ports. Give Gateway a call, and see if they have something to sell—otherwise, check with a local computer store.

Here's another alternative: you may want to purchase a switch box, with a manual A-B-C switch letting you connect multiple devices to a single parallel port, and switch between them.

Registry eviction wanted

I am looking for info on how to remove the previous owner's name from the Windows 95 Registry on a used system.

Wes Clark

Alan Zisman responds: The simplest way is to run REGEDIT (from the Start Menu's Run option), search for the previous owner's name, and when it shows up, change it to what you want. F3 lets you search again for the same thing.

Note you may also want to change a company name, if that's listed, too. You can check the currently listed names by right-clicking on the My Computer icon, and choosing "Properties."

Office pileup

I have two computers. One has 8 MB RAM and a 540 MB hard drive and the other has 16 MB RAM and a 1.2 GB hard drive. Is it possible to install the old version of Microsoft Office and Office 97 on my 16 MB RAM computer without affecting each version and my computer? I want to use the old version on my 8 MB RAM computer, as well as on my 16 MB RAM computer.

Bernadette

Alan Zisman responds: It is possible to install both versions of MS Office onto your more powerful computer, but I'd suggest you not bother. You can install Office 97 onto the more powerful one, and the older version (Office 95? an even older, Win 3.1 version?) onto the 8 MB machine.

Then, do two things. The Office 97 CD-ROM includes filters for Office 95 and the Win 3.1 versions of Word 6 and Excel 5 enabling those earlier programs to use files saved in Office 97 formats, and there's an update available on Microsoft's Web site enabling Word 97 to properly save in Word 95/Word 6 format (which was a problem with the original Word 97 release).

That way, you only need one version of Office on each computer, but can share files between them.

Non-Plussed?

I have Windows 95B and I see a folder that is called Plus. Is this the Plus that I see people

talking about? If so, what exactly does it do for me?

Richard Perry

Alan Zisman responds: The OEM version of WingsB (which is the only version of WingsB) installs a few of the Plus utilities by default. These include the items that Microsoft has subsequently released for free on the Internet, such as font smoothing and showing windows contents when dragging (you should have a PLUS! tab in your Control Panel/Display settings).

As well, WingsB includes the version of DriveSpace, DS3, otherwise only obtainable as part of the Plus package. It doesn't include the full package of features, however, such as the Pinball game, the System Agent, or the Desktop Themes. Luckily, it also doesn't include the Internet Explorer 1.0 version bundled with the commercial Plus package.

Email broadcasting possible?

I've been sending out a lot of emails recently and I'm starting to think there must be an easier way to do it. Right now I'm sending out about 100 copies of an electronic newsletter every month "by hand," cutting and pasting each email address and sending each individual email separately.

I know there are broadcast fax packages that can take all my names and then fax everyone quickly. Is there an equivalent software package for email?

Dan, via email

MacShrink David Rosen replies: You're in luck! There are a few software packages to do the job. The programs I'd recommend you check out first are Qualcomm's Eudora and Claris' Em@iler. Both allow you to load your names once and then send your messages to lots of people in a single broadcast. Qualcomm can be reached at <http://www.eudora.com> or by telephone at 619-658-5978. Due to the recent restructuring at Claris, the fate of Em@iler is somewhat clouded.

For now, however, Claris can be reached at its Web site (<http://www.claris.com>) or by phone at 800-3CLARIS.

Finicky file names

Sometimes I can't rename a file. How come?

Shauna, via email

MacShrink David Rosen replies: Well, as any good shrink should say, what do you think is wrong? There are many things that can be wrong, but I'll help you identify the most likely problems. The good news is that most of the problems are simple to identify and just as easy to fix.

First, the file could be locked. To find out, check the Get Info window for the "locked" checkbox. If this is the problem, you might be getting an "Error -45" message. To fix it, just click on the checkbox to unlock the file.

Next, the file could be being shared with someone else on your network. If this is the case, stop sharing the file (turn off file sharing in the Sharing Setup control panel in your System folder).

You can't change the name of a protected

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file. These protected files are those that your Mac needs to be able to find at all times, so they are "hardwired" into your machine's brain.

Protected file names include the Trash, the System, and the Finder. Imagine how confused your Mac would be if there were two Trash cans!

As well, you can't rename a file that is saved on a read-only volume, such as CD-ROMs and some disks containing copy-protected software.

Of course, it's also possible your file is damaged. Try using a backup copy of the file or use a utilities package such as Norton Utilities to see if the file can be saved.

Finally, the Desktop file or the disk itself could be damaged. Try to rebuild the Desktop (hold down the Command key and the Option key while restarting your Mac).

You might also try installing a fresh System from your original installation disks or CD-ROM. ♦

• Send Mac-related questions to David Rosen at MacGuy@tcpon.com. Note: all questions become the property of MacShrink and David Rosen.

• Send Windows or other software and hardware questions to Alan Zisman at azisman@mail.bc.rogers.ca.

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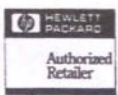



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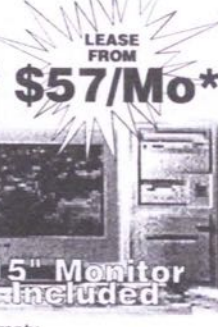
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